"THE DAMNATION OF FATHER FITZGERALD" IN THE LEDGER NEXT WEEK

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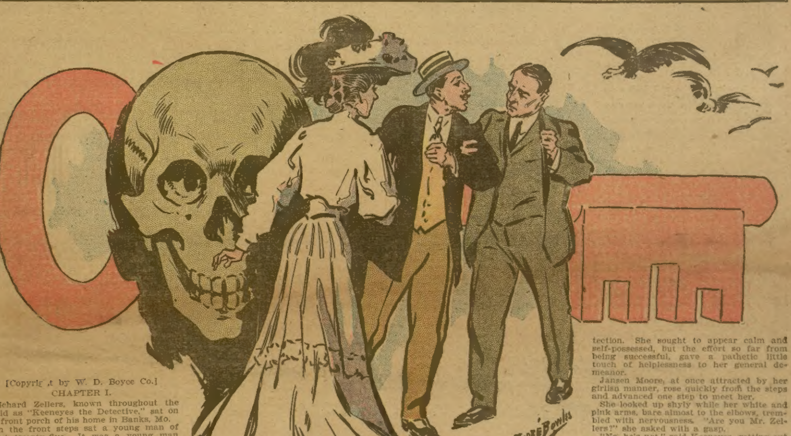
THE DEATH-KEY MYSTERY;

OR, A GREAT DETECTIVE'S RUSE. BY J. BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS.



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CHAPTER I.

Richard Zellers, known throughout the world as "Keeneyes the Detective," sat on the front porch of his home in Banks, Mo.

On the front steps sat a young man of about twenty-five. It was a young man who had once given himself up to dissipation, regardless of the opinion of the world and heedless of his own conscience.

Keeneyes had rescued the young man from the slums of the city, and had given him a temporary abiding place in his own house till the former drunkard could feel that he had mastered himself.

The name of this young man was Jansen Moore.

On the particular May afternoon in question, Keeneyes, who had just finished reading a letter, turned to Jansen Moore and remarked, "Another mystery case."

Will you take it up?" inquired the younger man.

"I will take it up, and I will solve it," said Keeneyes.

Jansen Moore began to whittle. He did not have near so high an opinion of the detective's acuteness as the detective himself had, and it sometimes almost irritated him that in one way or another, Keeneyes always proved correct in his deductions.

"I will take it up," said Keeneyes in rather an aggressive voice, "and when I lay it down there will be no mystery left in it."

Still Jansen Moore whittled in silence.

"Moore," said Keeneyes abruptly, "it has sometimes occurred to me that you do not think the way in which I reach the heart of great mysteries reflects any particular credit upon my intellect."

"Well—" began Jansen Moore. Then he whittled.

"Speak it out," said Keeneyes kindly.

"I think," said Jansen Moore with that positive assurance many people exhibit who do not know what they are talking about, "that while the never-varying success you show in solving these cases is wonderful, truly wonderful, nevertheless it is often, very often, the result of mere chance. You run across certain facts, and when you have enough in your possession, you put them together, just as I might, if I had the facts myself."

"Just as you [illegible]ight, Moore?" repeated Keeneyes smi[illegible]s.

"Just as I [illegible]ight," Jansen Moore reaffirmed.

"But, my [illegible] [illegible]on't you remember how completely be[illegible]ked you were all the time we were investigating that case of the House of th[illegible] Midnight Sound?

[illegible]es," cried Moore with spirit, "but all the time you were withholding from me certain fa[illegible]s known to you. Had I known those fa[illegible], I should not have been befogged. You once let me know all the facts you know, a[illegible] you'll see me reaching a conclusio[illegible] [illegible] them as fast as any man."

"As fast as ME?" cried Keeneyes frowning.

"As fast as any man!" Jansen Moore exclaimed.

There was a brief silence. Then the world-renowned detective spoke in a slow, low and impressive tone. "Jansen Moore, I am about to take up a mystery case. I shall keep you informed of every fact as I accidentally stumble over it; all that I know about the case you shall know. When I am ready to reach a reasonable inference from the facts in hand, I will warn you. Then you shall form your own conclusion for yourself. When your conclusion is formed as to the heart of the mystery you shall detail it to me. I shall then tell you what I have concluded in regard to the mystery. We will then find which of us is right. The one worsted in this little game of skill shall then perform any act the victorious antagonist may require of him. Is it agreed? We are sure that neither would require any act unbecoming a gentleman."

"I agree to that," Moore exclaimed, "and I shall require you to——"

"I think," Keeneyes remarked dryly, "you had better wait till you have proved your right to make requirements."

Keeneyes took from his pocket the letter he had just been reading.

He said, "I hold here absolutely everything I know thus far in regard to the new mystery. It is a letter from a young lady——"

"Ah!" Jansen Moore exclaimed.

"You are interested already," Keeneyes nodded. "A young lady, I say, named Sopha Le Brune. She lives on Whiteoak Farm—so she has headed the first sheet of paper—Whiteoak Farm, near Fenceville, Nebraska. I received this letter two days ago. All that it has told me I place in your hands."

Keeneyes gave the letter to Moore, and the young man read aloud:

" 'Mr. Richard Zellers,
Banks, Mo.

" 'Dear Sir:

" 'I shall be in Banks, Mo., on the 21st, at which time I hope to be granted an interview at your home. My business will deal with a mystery in the life of our family, of four years' standing. Very truly yours,

" '(MISS) SOPHA LE BRUNE.' "

Jansen Moore repeated, "Miss Sopha Le Brune. I like that name. And she writes such a good hand, and expresses herself so lucidly, and the note-paper breathes a delicious, almost imperceptible perfume. I shall be more than pleased to meet this young lady."

"I detest perfumery on letters or handkerchiefs," remarked the other. "As to her expressions, I find them far from lucid. She hasn't told us anything she should have told, and much that she didn't mean to tell. For instance, she is an inexperienced child, used to being taken care of instead of looking out for herself. But she writes with a painful straining to appear brief and business-like. There is a mystery in the life of her family. Now, what does she mean by that?"

"If we knew it wouldn't be a mystery," said Moore. "I think that is a capital letter, and if she is unused to the ways of the world I shall think no less of her on that account."

"This is the 21st," remarked Keeneyes, recovering the letter, "and without doubt, yonder she comes!"

The front gate opened and a young lady of about eighteen, entered the yard. She advanced with slightly hesitating steps. She was rather small and her slight body and pretty blonde head made appeal for protection. She sought to appear calm and self-possessed, but the effort so far from being successful, gave a pathetic little touch of helplessness to her general demeanor.

Jansen Moore, at once attracted by her girlish manner, rose quickly from the steps and advanced one step to meet her.

She looked up shyly while her white and pink arms, bare almost to the elbows, trembled with nervousness. "Are you Mr. Zellers?" she asked with a gasp.

"No, he's not," said Keeneyes, getting out of his rocking-chair; "I am Mr. Zellers."

Jansen Moore got out of the way, feeling somewhat abashed.

"Mr. Zellers," said the young lady, pausing at the foot of the steps, "I am Miss Le Brune, from Whiteoak Farm, near Fenceville, Nebraska."

"Yes," said Keeneyes, "I was looking for you. Will you come in? My wife will be pleased to receive you."

"No," said the lady, "I am here strictly on business. It is kind of you and her, but, no—can we talk here on the porch? I should like that. Will we be secure from interruption here?"

"Quite secure," said Keeneyes. "Pray take this seat."

She ascended the steps then looked doubtfully at Jansen Moore and said, "What I have to tell is in strict confidence as a business lady to her detective."

Keeneyes had never before allowed his services to be taken for granted by a stranger, but he bowed gravely, while Moore could hardly restrain a smile at the phrase "business lady."

Again Sopha Le Brune looked at Jansen Moore.

"Don't mind him," said Keeneyes, "he's my understudy."

"I beg your pardon?" said the lady faintly. Again she looked at the young man to go away. But he was helpless under the rays of her blue eyes.

"He is my assistant, Miss Le Brune," said Keeneyes. "You may trust him as you do me. We work together. He is a sort of medical student assisting at an operation. His name is Moore. Pay no attention to him."

Jansen Moore darted a look of rebuke at his friend, but Keeneyes turned to the lady. "I received your note, Miss Le Brune. It interested me very much. Will you now kindly explain what mystery has been in the life of the family for four years?"

"That is what I am here for, but I hardly know how to begin."

"Oh, then I will help you. You are just of age, are you not?"

"Yes, sir, just eighteen the first of this week."

"So I gathered from your letter. Your father is dead? Do you live with your mother?"

"I do."

"Your guardian didn't want you to spend your money on solving the mystery, I take it," said Keeneyes, "but now that you are of age, you have taken the matter up in spite of his economical prudence."

"You are a good guesser," said Miss Le Brune in astonishment.

"No, I am a good detective. So your relative mysteriously died four years ago? What kin was he or she to you?"

"He was my great-uncle."

"Indeed? So your great-uncle died four years ago, mysteriously. Was there no one in his immediate family to take up the matter?"

"My mother and I are his only living relatives. My guardian is not related to his side of the family."

"He was an old man," said Keeneyes. "Had he married a young bride?"

"How could you guess that?" Sopha Le Brune exclaimed.

"It comes so natural to old men," remarked Keeneyes smiling.

"Yes," said the pretty blonde, her face clouding, "he married a young lady not much older than I am now."

"The widow survives?"

"Oh, yes," said Sopha dryly. "She has married again."

"Was your great-uncle rich?"

"He was very well-to-do; he was prosperous."

"Was his property willed to his wife?"

"It was all made over to her."

"So!" exclaimed Jansen Moore.

"But she would not accept it," said Sopha, shaking her golden head. "She offered it all to mother and mother finally persuaded her to accept money for the old farm—it was not near so much as it was worth. The rest all went to charity."

"Why would your great-uncle's wife not receive the property left her?"

"There were remarks," said Sopha.

"Oh, I see," said Keeneyes. "And since then she has married her old sweetheart?"

"Yes, less than a year ago."

"The former sweetheart was accused of killing your great-uncle?"

"Yes."

"They imprisoned him and had a trial, and could prove nothing?"

"It was just that way. There was no evidence."

"Yes, you think he was guilty?"

"Many in the neighborhood believe it?"

"I take it then that when he married the widow he took her away to live."

"Yet, you think he was guilty?"

"They were sweethearts during her girlhood, before she married your great-uncle?"

"Yes, sir. She was very poor and so was he. They were sweethearts at school. When she married my great-uncle, he went away. He was gone two years. When he came back—well, my great-uncle was killed that very day."

CHAPTER II.

"This," said Keeneyes, "is a very interesting story, but there seems to be nothing new or original about it. Of course, it is always of moment when a man gets killed. But in the case of your great-uncle, it seems but a repetition of a thousand and one such events. Here was a young girl, poor and presumably pretty, in love with a young fellow, poor and presumably trifling and unbusiness-like. Along comes an old man, your great-uncle, and proposes marriage. He owns a farm, etc. The poor girl sees a sudden opening in the clouds of poverty. Very good. Excellent. She marries the old man. The poor young chap goes off in the sulks and is gone two years. Comes back one day. Old man is killed the same day. Two or three years pass; then the widow marries her old sweetheart. Is that the history?"

"Just as it happened," said Sopha Le Brune.

"And you want me to find clews to prove the poor man killed his rich old rival?"

"I do."

"But suppose," said Keeneyes, "I should prove that it was not he who killed your great-uncle?"

"But," said the young lady, "how did it happen that my great-uncle was killed the very day the other came back from abroad?"

"But," Keeneyes persisted, "suppose it develops that he really did not kill your great-uncle?"

"If he is innocent," said Sopha, "I shall be more than repaid by your proving it. I want the guilty man punished; but I do not want any innocent one to suffer."

"Good!" cried Jansen Moore; "that is an admirable sentiment."

"Moore," said Keeneyes coolly, "will you please keep off the grass. Well, Miss Le Brune, give us a few working-names." For instance, what was the name of your great-uncle?"

"Boliver Bering."

"Just as I foresaw," cried Keeneyes. "Why, I read all about that case when the papers were full of it. I have pictures of the farmhouse and of the room where the murdered man lay, and of the principal hotel in Fenceville. The tragedy occurred at Whiteoak Farm—you are living in the very house!"

"Yes, mother bought it from that—that woman.

"It was this way, Moore," said Keeneyes, turning to Jansen Moore. "There was a young girl named Winnie Toppleton, very poor, and strikingly beautiful, in love with a drug store clerk named Phil Deedum. Phil was a pretty good kind of chap, but his father went security for a man that proved dishonest, and when he died, Phil shouldered the debt, gave up all he had. Winnie Toppleton said there was no likelihood of Phil making good for some years so she took old Mr. Boliver Bering while she had the chance. When they married Phil went to Australia, broken-hearted, as he supposed. He stays away two years, living out in the wilds, but making money. He pays off his father's debts, then comes home, still thinking more of Winnie Toppleton than she ever deserved; but that's how it is—she was just so pretty, she couldn't help being charming to look at, and Phil couldn't help looking and being charmed. There is no more praise due her for her looks than blame due him for being a fool.

"Well, he was a moral young man, and meant no harm, but see the sweetheart of his young days again, he must. So he goes to the old farmhouse carrying a stick—mark the stick well. He has walked out from Fenceville—the farm is about two miles out, eh, Miss Le Brune?"

"It is called that, but seems farther," said Sopha.

"Of course. Well he is wandering about the country as a pedestrian,—nobody has recognized him so far, because he's kept out of people's way. It is about four o'clock. To reduce the matter to mathematical precision, let us say it is just four o'clock. Now we are getting this case on a splendid basis," said Keeneyes in manifest enjoyment.

Sopha Le Brune glanced at him reproachfully, for in any way she looked at it, she could see nothing "splendid" in the murder of her great-uncle.

Young Jansen Moore, looking covertly at the young lady, was saying to himself that he had never seen any one more charming.

"At four o'clock, then," Keeneyes resumed, "Phil Deedum, the rejected lover, wanders across the country to the Whiteoak farmhouse, nobody seeing him coming. Now, sometime later, Phil Deedum appears at another farmhouse about half a mile from Whiteoak Farm, and excitedly tells the family that on entering the Whiteoak farmhouse, he found old Boliver Bering lying upon the kitchen floor, dead. Moore, are you following me?" Keeneyes broke off to ask sternly.

"What is it?" said Jansen Moore sternly. "Oh, yes,—Kitchen floor. Yes, go on, Mr. Zellers."

Keeneyes waited a moment, then said: "Now, at the same time Phil Deedum was telling the Bates family about what he had seen——"

"Or," interposed Sopha, "what he pretended that he had seen."

"Just so," Keeneyes agreed tranquilly; "while he was telling his story, true or false, where was the young and beautiful wife of Boliver Bering, she who had been the sweetheart of this Phil Deedum? Do you keep these relationships in your mind, Moore?"

"Of course I do," said Jansen Moore, testily. At the same time he was so pleased by Sopha's appearance that he could think of little else, as it needed no detective to observe. Sopha, aware of the interest she had excited, sat with her eyes upon the detective, her little hands folded in her lap and apparently unaware of Jansen Moore's existence. Keeneyes, somewhat restive at not having Jansen Moore's entire attention, continued:

"Where, I say, was Mrs. Boliver Bering? Well, at the same time Phil Deedum was telling the Bateses about finding your great-uncle dead on the kitchen floor, Miss Le Brune, this Mrs. Boliver Bering, was telling the Collis family that she had entered her home a few minutes before, and had been horrified by finding her husband motionless and apparently dead, upon the parlor floor. Do you mark the discrepancy, Moore?"

"What discrepancy?" demanded Moore.

"What discrepancy?" repeated the detective. "Why, man alive! was it no discrepancy for Mrs. Bering to say she found her husband dead upon the parlor floor, and for Phil Deedum to say he found him dead on the kitchen floor?"

"Oh,—that," said Moore confusedly.

"Yes, that," returned Keeneyes. "Both must have seen the dead man at about the same time, for both were telling the neighbors of the discovery at about the same time; yet Mrs. Bering says she found the corpse in the parlor, whereas Phil Deedum claims that he discovered the corpse,—the same corpse, mind you,—there was but one, Moore, only one,— in the kitchen."

"That would seem to show," Moore ventured, "that this Phil Deedum and Mrs. Boliver Bering couldn't have got together to concoct a story in regard to the murder or they would have agreed upon the location."

"That deduction would seem to show," said Keeneyes, satirically, "that your brain—but there is a lady present. Look, Moore, the point is, why did Deedum see that corpse in the kitchen, whereas Mrs. Bering saw it in the parlor? Or, if they were speaking falsehoods, what motive could either have for placing that corpse where it had no right to lie?"

"Perhaps——" said Jansen Moore.

"If it comes to that," retorted Keeneyes, "I can give you suppositions and they are as follows:

"1. Mrs. Bering killed her husband, and Deedum, to shield her, pretended he saw the corpse, whereas he hadn't seen it, and didn't know how to locate it. In that case, Mrs. Bering confesses to her former sweetheart that she has just committed the deed. He set off post haste toward the Bateses' home while she hurries in an opposite direction to the Collis family. He places the tragedy in the kitchen as a likely place, while she tells the Collises where she had really left the corpse, namely in the parlor.

"2. Again, Phil Deedum killed the old man in the kitchen, and on rushing from the house, encounters Mrs. Bering, confesses what he had done, and she sets off post haste to the Collises to protect her former lover, but doesn't know in what room he had done the deed, so pitches upon the parlor; whereas Deedum tells the Bateses he accidentally came upon the body in the kitchen,—where he had really committed the crime.

"3. Neither killed the old man, but one of them found the dead body, and fearing suspicion might be incurred, hurries away to tell the neighbors, and the other one, knowing suspicion will accrue, but not having seen the dead body, hurries to tell another family to distract suspicion.

"4. After Mrs. Bering saw the corpse, it was taken to the kitchen where Phil Deedum discovered it."

"From these suppositions," said Moore, "almost anything might have happened."

"Not at all," retorted Keeneyes. "These suppositions make it as clear as noonday, that the deed could not have been committed by Mrs. Bering and Deedum in conjunction, else there would have been no discrepancy in regard to where the corpse was found."

"My uncle's body," said Miss Le Brune, "was really found upon the parlor floor."

"And there was no evidence to show it had been first on the kitchen floor?"

"No, sir. But Mr. Deedum's walking-stick was found upon the kitchen floor. That is what led to his being imprisoned."

"But," said Jansen Moore, "why should his walking-stick have been found upon the kitchen floor, if the corpse lay upon the parlor floor?"

"If it comes to that," said Keeneyes, "why was Phil Deedum in that kitchen? Is it customary for a man's unsuccessful rival, after staying out of the country for two years, to come back and enter one's kitchen with one's walking-stick?"

"I am confused," said Jansen Moore.

"Yes," said Keeneyes. "Now, let us consider how your great-uncle was killed, Miss Le Brune. It is a lovely case, ma'am. There is no shedding of blood, nothing vulgar in the entire proceedings; simply a neat little wound upon the right temple,—if I remember, it was the right temple. I read all this four years ago, and I may have a detail incorrect, but I do not think it."

"It was the right temple," said Sopha sadly.

"Just so. Good, excellent. It was just such a wound as a walking-stick would have inflicted, was it not?"

"Everybody knew," said Sopha with energy, "that my uncle was killed by that walking-stick. If Mr. Deedum had not used it in that horrible way, why did he throw it away and run to the Bateses, half a mile away?"

"My dear Miss Le Brune, do not speak of what everybody knows, I pray you. What everybody knows is either not worth knowing or is more than likely an error. I grant that the walking-stick is damaging evidence. Still, a man ought not to be hung for carrying a cane. Was not another weapon found upon the kitchen floor, or better still the parlor floor, whereby Mr. Boliver Bering might have been dispatched?"

"None," said the young lady.

"You are quite sure?" said Keeneyes. "I have an impression that another weapon lay upon the floor."

"No, sir, there was nothing but the walking-stick."

"It is singular," said Keeneyes, "but I seem to remember that some other weapon was found."

Sopha Le Brune shook her head with conviction. "None at all," she said. "The walking-stick was the only clew ever discovered."

"Ah, well," said Keeneyes, "now that you have engaged my services, you will soon have more clews turned up than we will know what to do with. Eh, Moore?"

"If you turn them up," said Jansen Moore, "I shall know what to do with them."

"Ah," Keeneyes smiled, "I have not forgotten our little agreement made just before Miss Le Brune came. But I forget nothing."

"One great difficulty, Mr. Detective," said Sopha, "is that all this happened four years ago. It will be hard to bring everything back just as it was. Mr. Deedum has married that—that woman, and they are living in Florida. My mother and I live in Whiteoak and we have changed the house a good deal since dear uncle was killed. I was a great pet of his. I was fourteen when he was killed, but my guardian wouldn't let me spend my money, as I wished, on offering a reward for the conviction of the murderer."

"Your guardian, I suppose, was as anxious as any one to have the guilty man brought to justice?"

"Oh, yes, but he is very close; he wouldn't let me use my money except for necessities."

"Quite proper. Well, Moore and I will come at once to your farm and, in a day or so, we will turn over to you the guilty party."

"Oh, Mr. Zellers! is it possible?"

"Am I Keeneyes?" retorted the other: "of course it is possible. If the murderer lives at a distance,—say, in Florida,—of course, you must give me time to travel back and forth. I shall know [illegible] a day or two who killed your great-uncle, and as soon thereafter as trains and telegrams can travel I will put the guilty person in your hands."

"Mr. Zellers," spoke Jansen Moore, "if, as I suppose, Miss Le Brune is going directly home, why may we not go with her."

"It is best for us," said Keeneyes calmly, "to work with undistracted minds."

"What does that mean?" Moore asked, flushing.

"Is there anything else I can tell you, Mr. Detective?" asked Sopha, quickly.

"Absolutely nothing."

She smiled at him timidly and said, "After all, it seems that you have been telling me rather than I have been giving you any information."

"Oh, yes," said Keeneyes.

She rose.

"Miss Le Brune," said Moore, with becoming gravity, "will you permit me to go with you to your hotel?"

"It is not necessary," said the young lady; "I am stopping at a private boarding house."

"I will go with you to the boarding house," said Jansen Moore, eagerly.

Sopha Le Brune hesitated a moment, then said demurely: "Well."

They walked away together. Keeneyes watched them with knitted brows as they swung along the street in fast-growing acquaintanceship. He sighed. "It's a good thing to be young," he muttered, "even if one must be half a fool!"

He noticed that Jansen Moore's head swung on the side next to the young lady, and the young lady's head was set midway, noncommittal.

Keeneyes raised his voice and called, "Henrietta!"

His wife appeared at the front door.

"Come out and sit with me, Henrietta," said Keeneyes; "somehow or other, I'm feeling lonesome."

CHAPTER III.

When Jansen Moore returned from escorting Sopha Le Brune to her private boarding house, he found Keeneyes serenely seated beside his wife upon the front porch.

A general air of contentment and domesticity prevailed.

Jansen Moore, however, had no eyes for the domesticity of others. His thoughts were busy with the young lady from whom he had just parted. He sank down upon the porch steps with an air of melancholy abstraction.

"Henrietta," said Keeneyes to his wife, "why is it that the prettier a girl is, the sadder it makes a man feel?"

"I hope," said Mrs. Zellers, "that the subject of pretty girls no longer interests you, Mr. Zellers."

"Such a hope," said Keeneyes gallantly, "depreciates yourself, my dear. But delightful though it is to be thus in the company of the prettiest of them all, I must ask you to retire, for Moore and I are about to discuss a new mystery case."

Mrs. Zellers rose with a sweetness and docility that all the wives of Banks, Missouri, might well have accepted as a model to imitate.

In fact, Keeneyes never discussed any mystery cases with his wife. "One detective in a family is sufficient," he sometimes said. "Besides, murder and hangings are not the legitimate sphere of women."

When Mrs. Zellers went back to her sewing, Keeneyes entered the house and sought his private library. One wall of the room was devoted exclusively to old newspapers, assorted in little boxes, according to the mystery case with which they dwelt.

Keeneyes took down a shallow box upon which was written in a bold hand, "Boliver Bering."

He took the box out on the front porch.

Jansen Moore still sat upon the steps as if he had not noticed the departure of his host and hostess.

"Moore," said Keeneyes, "you remember, no doubt, your old sweetheart, Nell Atkins?"

"Oh, yes," said Jansen Moore, abstractedly.

"You will recall how you let another young man cut you out and marry her off hand?"

"Well, well," said Moore, impatiently, "why do you remind me of her?"

"I have a bit of news in regard to her," said Keeneyes, seating himself, "there's a baby."

Jansen Moore leaned forward, pulled up a few spears of grass, scattered them on the air and said indifferently, "I don't care."

"Now," said Keeneyes, "this young lady who has brought us our mystery case, this Miss Le Brune——"

"Charming girl!" Moore murmured dreamily.

Keeneyes took some papers out of his box and said drily, "Let us attend to business. You have agreed with me to share and share alike on the facts in this mystery case of Boliver Bering. As to inferences to be drawn from said facts, each is to keep them to himself. Now, you have been handed all the facts that were in my possession, except a few illustrations made from woodcuts in the papers at the time of the old man's murder. I am going to show you these pictures and then you will be on an equal footing with me, in the matter."

Keeneyes opened up a roll of four-year-old newspapers.

"There is a great deal of reading matter there, in regard to the case," Moore observed.

"Oh, yes, read it if you choose; but really, everything known about the tragedy might be put in a few lines. The old man was killed by a blow on the right temple. His young wife claimed to have come home from a visit to a neighbor—namely, Mrs. Collis.

"She sees the corpse in the parlor and runs back to the Collises to give the alarm.

"In the meantime, Phil Deedum runs to the Bateses, crying out that he has found the corpse in the kitchen.

"The neighborhood is aroused; the corpse is found in the parlor, and Phil Deedum's walking-stick, in the kitchen. Those are the facts.

"Deedum is arrested, tried, cleared for lack of evidence, and later he and the young widow marry. Those are the sequels or corollaries.

"Now, observe these pictures, taken a day or two after the tragedy, by enterprising reporters. Here is the Fenceville Courthouse."

"But what has that to do with it?" asked Moore, with a fleeting glance at an old brick building, square and unadorned.

"That you may judge for yourself. Here is a picture of the oldest woman in the county, 102 years old and still spry."

"How is she connected with the case?"

"I have been unable to attach her to it," said Keeneyes. "Here is a picture of the Whiteoak's farmhouse, where the corpse was found."

"Just an ordinary story-and-a-half frame," remarked Moore. "But is that where Sopha Le Brune lives? It seems a delightful place. Those large shade trees are romantic. I am eager to go there."

"We will go tonight. Here is an interior view of the parlor, and this cross-mark indicates where the body was found lying."

Moore examined the picture with more care. At last he said, "The artist has failed to catch a clew, if a clew was there."

"Oh, indeed!" said Keeneyes smiling.

"Well," said Moore, "do you see a clew there?"

"Of course, I do. A remarkable clew. Look at that bench-pl[illegible] st[illegible]."

"I see that, b[illegible] of it," returned Moore. "There are no stains of any kind upon it."

"Stains!" cried Keeneyes. "But, my dear

fellow, there was no bloodshed to cause stains. Who is looking for stains?"

"Then, what about the old piano stool?"

"Notice how far it is from the piano, and how cross-cornered it stands to the rest of the furniture."

Jensen Moore smiled. "People don't always keep their piano stools with their toes marking a line," he said satirically.

"True," said Keeneyes gently. "Hand me back the picture, Moore. I see you are done with it. Now, here is a picture of the interior of the kitchen, taken before it had been altered after the tragedy. This cross-mark is where Phil Deedum claims he discovered the corpse on coming into the room, and this little circle is where his walking-stick was found lying."

"Ah," said Moore, "the stick was very near the place where he said he saw the old man lying."

"Yes, quite near," Keeneyes agreed.

"If the corpse had really been found there," said Moore, "that would be a damaging bit of evidence. But the corpse wasn't there, you will remember, but in the parlor."

"Then why did Phil Deedum say he saw it there?" demanded Keeneyes.

"That's the mystery," said Moore.

Keeneyes smiled again in that knowing way that was peculiarly irritating to Moore. "Now, Mr. Zellers," he said, "can you find any clews in this picture of the kitchen floor."

"I find a remarkable clew," said Keeneyes genially.

"You mean the position of the walking-stick?"

"I wouldn't give a straw for that walking-stick. My dear fellow, look over here on the floor, three feet at least from the walking-stick. What is that lying on the bare board?"

"I don't see anything. You don't mean that key, do you?"

"Why, of course I mean the key."

"What of it? What of the key?"

"It will unlock the mystery," said Keeneyes.

"I see nothing peculiar about the key."

"Oh, you don't! Doesn't it strike you as unusually large to show up in this woodcut?"

"Well," returned Moore, "I've seen much larger keys than that."

"My dear old comrade," said Keeneyes impatiently, "the question is not what you saw at the World's Fair, but what we see in this picture. Now, is not this key an unusually large iron key?"

"It is larger than an ordinary house-door key," Moore admitted.

"Very well!" exclaimed Keeneyes, nodding. "Good. Excellent. Now, old man, how came that key there?"

"How should I know?"

"But infer, Moore, infer, make an inference."

"Perhaps, when the old man was struck down he dropped the key from his pocket or from his hand."

"Then why didn't he drop it in the parlor where he dropped himself?"

"I do not know."

"I think I do," said Keeneyes, "and therefore, I believe I understand the entire mystery just as thoroughly as if I had made it. The only reason I do not explain it all to you on the spot, is that you have entered upon a contest of skill with me, to prove you can detect as cleverly as I. All that remains for me to do is to prove what I infer. I could win the contest even now by explaining my conviction, for it would soon be proved correct. But I am going to wait on you. I am going to pile the facts so high under your nose, that you will strike it against them in your gropings. I shall give you ever possible chance to show your ability; and after this, I trust you will never again insinuate that you, or any other man, is the equal of Keeneyes the Detective."

"Mr. Zellers," said Moore, abstractedly, "did you ever see precisely such a heavenly shade of warm blue as that of Sopha Le Brune's eyes?"

CHAPTER IV.

That night Keeneyes and Jansen Moore took the train for Fencevill, Nebraska. "We must get to the scene of the tragedy before Miss Le Brune arrives," said Keeneyes, "because as soon as she comes she will spread abroad the news that she has engaged a detective. She couldn't keep a secret. None of those little women with golden hair can keep a secret."

"I am sure Sopha Le Brune is not like other women," said Moore rather stiffly, "she could keep a secret."

Keeneyes smiled.

"Mr. Zellers, since you think you know all about the Boliver Bering case, why didn't you explain the mystery four years ago when he was killed?"

"I wasn't consulted. I do not offer my services; I grant them."

It was in the morning when they reached the small country seat of Fenceville. "We will go at once to the law office of J. J. James," said Keeneyes; "he is Miss Le Brune's guardian,—rather was before she reached majority."

J. J. James, a tall, wiry man of fifty, was found alone in his office with his heels on the window-sill and his head in a yellow leather-backed book.

"This is Mr. James?" said Keeneyes. "My name is Zellers, and this is my friend Moore. Are you engaged?"

"I am, gentlemen," said Mr. James. "I have a case on in a couple of hours, and I am looking up some authority. Can you come around this afternoon?"

"No, we can't," said Keeneyes, sitting down. "I was particularly anxious to find you engaged,—sit down Moore. When a man is engaged, his brain is at its highest activity, and I want your mind at its highest activity, for m[illegible] business is delicate. So allow me to tr[illegible]er your interest from your case to m[illegible]; I will take but a few moments. I don[illegible] wa[illegible] other people's time, nor allow them [illegible] w[illegible]e."

J. J. James laid down h[illegible] book in amazement. "What do you want, sir?" he demanded severely. [illegible] You have a peculiar way of approaching a man for favors. Where are you from?—Missouri?"

"I don't want any favor," said Keeneyes quietly, "and I'm from Missouri, too. You were Miss Le Brune's guardian. Why did you not allow me to investigate the mystery of her great-uncle's death at the time when clews were fresh and interest was most intense?"

"Will you kindly leave my office?" said James rising, "or will you give me the trouble of having you forcibly ejected?"

"I will go without giving you that trouble," said Keeneyes; "as for my friend Moore, I don't know whether he will come away peaceably or engage with you in a struggle."

"Of course I will go peaceably," said Moore, with some indignation. "I had no desire to intrude upon you, Mr. James, and I beg your pardon. I am not responsible for the conduct of Mr. Zellers."

J. J. James bowed frigidly, then glared at Zellers.

"Perhaps I should explain," said Zellers, jauntily, "that my friend Moore has come here to Fenceville in the capacity of a detective, and he is determined to ferret out that mystery of four years ago. You will have him to reckon with, Mr. James, I warn you. Good-day, sir."

When they had left the office, Moore turned upon his companion. "Mr. Zellers," he said with heat, "I do not forget the obligation under which I rest. But I do not understand why you try my self-restraint so severely. You know I am more than interested in Miss Le Brune; yet you have made me odious to her guardian, and it was entirely gratuitous. There was nothing to gain by it. It was—it was—it was outrageous."

"My dear and heated friend," said Keeneyes coolly, "it was nothing of the sort. Do I go about the country doing things for pastime? When I do things it is because they need to be done. I have taken you to Miss Le Brune's guardian. I have presented you, as it were, with a series of facts. Now infer, Moore, infer."

"I infer——" began Moore. He checked himself, then added, "It is best for me not to express in words what I infer."

"I have promised to give you facts," said Keeneyes, "and you are to deduce from them who killed old Boliver Bering. Good. Now come with me and we will turn up some more facts. Let us go to the home of the Bates family; and bear in mind it was to the Bateses that Phil Deedum hastened four years ago with his tale of having found the corpse in the kitchen."

At a livery stable they secured a buggy, and having learned where the Bateses lived, drove rapidly in that direction; Keeneyes breathing in the fresh country air with delight, and Moore openly sulking.

At the farmhouse, they found Mr. Bates mending the road fence, so they were spared the pains of driving through the gate. As soon as the nature of their business was explained, and Mr. Bates professed himself more than willing to tell all he knew, Keeneyes plied him with questions.

Nothing, however, was to be gleaned from the old man's harvest of words, save the meager sheaf of facts already cradled in the old newspapers. Phil Deedum, supposed by the Bates household to be in Australia, had suddenly appeared like a ghost at the side door, saying in an excited voice that he had found old Mr. Bering dead upon his kitchen floor. The family had hurried thither and found the corpse in the parlor instead of the kitchen. Phil Deedum had appeared dumb with amazement and had never been able to explain the discrepancy, except by suggesting that some one had been to the house during his absence and had dragged the body to the parlor.

"But why," Mr. Bates asked, "should any one do that?"

"Ah, Moore," said Keeneyes, "can you think why?"

"There could be no motive for such a needless and gruesome hauling about of the corpse," Moore declared emphatically.

"You're right," cried Mr. Bates, leaning on the fence and bobbing his chin-beard up and down, "and that's why we know that Phil Deedum lied when he said he see the[illegible]rpse on the kitchen floor. But we could[illegible]t prove nothing because they wasn't no witness."

"While P[illegible] Deedum was telling you about seeing the dead man in the kitchen, Mrs. Bering wa[illegible]elling the Collises about seeing her [illegible]d lying on the parlor floor,—eh, Mr. Bates?"

"It must have been along about that there time," said Mr. Bates. "She was telling what she[illegible]en; but Phil Deedum, he was telling—I don't know what he was a-telling, nor why on earth he ever told it. If he killed the old man, why did he come and tell us he see him on the kitchen floor? And if he killed him in the parlor why was his walking-stick a-laying on the kitchen floor?"

"Why was it, Moore?" inquired Zellers respectfully. He added to Bates, "Mr. Moore has come up here to investigate this matter. What do you infer, Moore?"

"It is very mysterious," said Moore shaking his head.

"Are you a detective?" Bates asked of Moore, in awe.

"He's trying to be," said Keeneyes. "Well, let us be going, unless Mr. Moore desires to pursue this matter farther."

As they drove away, Keeneyes remarked, "There are some facts I have presented you with. Now, there is really no use to visit the Collis family; they could only tell us what we already know. Let's go to the court house, and hear J. J. James pleading his case."

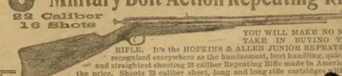
"I would rather go out to Whiteoak Farm and see Sopha Le Brune's home."

"But she isn't there."

"Her mother is."

"I want to hear J. J. James," said Keeneyes. "Now you allow me to load you up with facts. There are no facts out at that farmhouse,—merely romance."

Moore unwillingly went with Keeneyes to the court house. A case was in progress, but so far from giving it any attention, Keeneyes sat scribbling upon a stray bit of paper. Presently he wrote something in his notebook. Then he folded up the scrap of paper, wrote upon it, "J. J. James, Esq.," and passed it up to the lawyers' table.



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"Now we'll go," he said to Moore. When they were outside, the detective said, "It is your right to know what I wrote to J. J. James, because I have promised to keep you stocked with every fact that comes my way."

He opened his notebook. "I will read you a copy of that note."

He read: "My dear Mr. James: You have my friend Moore to reckon with. Allow his friend to advise you that you have him to reckon with. He will sleep tonight in the barn on Whiteoak Farm. I advise you, before it is too late, to seek an interview with him there at any time between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock. You will find he is not to be trifled with. It is much better to make terms with him before he forces his own terms.

"I have the honor to be, my dear sir, Yours most truly, RICHARD ZELLERS."

Moore stared blankly at the detective and was mute.

"Well," said Keeneyes, "what do you think of it? Does it suit you?"

"Suit me?" cried Moore indignantly. "Why are you always dragging me into collision with Sopha's guardian? I don't want to have an interview with the man. And how do you know I am going to sleep at Sopha's barn? Why should I be prowling around her barn at eleven o'clock at night? And if J. J. James comes to hold the interview, I'll have nothing to say to him."

"Oh," said Keeneyes, easily, "J. J. James won't come at any such an hour."

"Then why did you write for him to come? Why did you write the note, anyhow?"

"But that is for you to infer," said Keeneyes. "I am handing you a fact. The note was written, and J. J. James has read it. That is the fact for you to grapple with."

"But you are manufacturing facts that have no bearing on this case," said Moore with smouldering displeasure. "Suppose I should cuff you on the head and explain it by just saying it was a fact. Would that satisfy you?"

"It would satisfy me until I had presented you with a fact in exchange of a kindred nature," said Keeneyes frowning. "My dear fellow, you cannot possibly know how displeasing it is to me to hear any one advance the supposition of cuffing my head. It ruffles me. Please don't propose such hypotheses again. I beg to assure you this note I have written J. J. James has a most direct and important bearing upon the Boliver Bering case. Let us not discuss it further; but in the meantime, infer to yourself as much as you please."

"When do you think Sopha Le Brune will come home?" asked Moore, swallowing with difficulty.

"She will go to my house today," said Keeneyes, "for a final interview. My wife will tell her I have already come to Fenceville. She will reach here in the morning."

"Then," said Moore, "I shall not mind so much going to the barn. If she were at home, I could not feel as if I were a gentleman while sneaking about her barn. What have we to do today?"

"Absolutely nothing," said Keeneyes. "I shall write on my autobiography. You are at liberty to roam at will."

"Then I'll visit Whiteoak Farm; when I think that Sopha Le Brune has passed several years there and will be there tomorrow, I am all eagerness to breathe its atmosphere."

"Now, Moore," said Keeneyes, "if you go out there you'll make some mistake. I'd best go with you."

"No you hadn't," said Moore quickly. "I merely want to roam about."

"But Miss Le Brune's mother is there. What will she think of a strange man roaming about her premises?"

"She knows her daughter has gone to engage a detective."

"She didn't go to engage you."

"I won't let anybody see me," said Moore, "and if I'm seen, I'll simply inquire my way back to Fenceville, or pretend to be a book agent or something."

"I will let you go," said Keeneyes after reflection. "It is a fearful risk, but I desire to be alone the most of the day. I find in writing my life-work that it is next to impossible to leave out anything that ever I said or did. I would like to choose only the most important acts and words, but when I regard my personal history, everything seems important. Now I am at work on a chapter regarding——"

"Yes, yes," said Moore, hastily; "well good-by, dear friend, I will turn up at the hotel sometime about dusk, I imagine."

CHAPTER V.

Keeneyes was left at the hotel where he at once went to his room, took from his valise a quantity of blank paper and notes and resumed work upon his autobiography.

Jansen Moore, feeling somewhat like a schoolboy on a holiday, hurried from Fenceville afoot.

In due time he came in sight of Whiteoak Farm.

He approached it cautiously.

He had never seen the farm before, but the fact that it was the home of Sopha Le Brune invested it for him with the tenderest interest. It is true he had met Sopha only once. Moore, however, was not the kind of young man that must look at a girl five or six months before coming to a conclusion. Moore had already reached the conclusion that he was in love. He would have to see Sopha again to be quite sure about it, but he fancied he was not mistaken. In the meantime he would examine her homestead.

He trudged along the country road, gazing upon rolling meadows.

At last he saw a big red gate with a patent device for entering it without getting out of one's buggy. From the gate, a road swept over the dimpled pasture lands to a house set upon a hill and surrounded by oak trees. It was pretty and picturesque.

The young man walked along the highway, looking over the wire fence at the house. That was where Sopha lived! His heart beat. It was also where her great-uncle had been murdered; but he thought little of that. The great-uncle was dead and gone, Sopha was a living question.

Jansen Moore had not gone far beyond the gate, when a form appeared upon the piazza of that distant farmhouse. It was that of a woman, no doubt Sopha's mother. Jansen Moore stopped abruptly and gazed. The form was low and slight with golden hair; yes, if it wasn't Sopha—that, however, was impossible,—but if it wasn't Sopha, it must be Sopha's mother.

The woman was looking at him. Moore was powerless to go on, but he felt that he needed some excuse for standing like a statue in the middle of the road. He took his letters from his pocket and pretended to examine them as if fearing he had lost something. Between times, he looked covertly toward the farmhouse. The form upon the piazza did not move.

Presently, Moore resolutely thrust his letters into his pocket and returned to the gate. He opened it and entered the pasture. He slowly approached the house, trying to determine on what he would say when he reached the house. He came to the yard gate and passed through. The form on the piazza did not change. The blonde head was turned toward him and the blue eyes were riveted on his face.

Jansen Moore walked up to the piazza, doffing his hat as he paused before the steps.

"Good morning," said the lady of forty-five. She was dressed in black, but despite the changes wrought by grief and mourning, the likeness to her young daughter was striking.

"Good morning," said Moore.

"I was afraid you were going on by our farm," said Mrs. Le Brune.

"Oh, no," Jansen Moore assured her. Inwardly he marvelled.

"Do you know what time it is?" Mrs. Le Brune inquired rather coldly.

Jansen Moore hastened to draw forth his watch. "Almost ten o'clock, Mrs. Le Brune," he ventured.

"I looked for you three hours ago," said the lady.

"Oh!" murmured Moore, aghast.

"You are late!" she said severely.

"I couldn't come a minute sooner," stammered the young man.

"Well, well, let us not lose any more time," said the lady with the air of pardoning a culprit. "You may hang your coat on that honey-suckle frame."

"Hang my coat?" repeated the young man.

"Yes,—on that frame, yonder."

"But I purpose to keep on my coat," said Moore tenaciously.

"You will ruin it if you do," said Mrs. Le Brune. "Come; I will show you the way."

It was evident to Jansen Moore that he had been mistaken for somebody else. That, however, suited him exactly, since it was the wish of Keeneyes that he conceal his real identity.

Mrs. Le Brune walked around the house, and Moore followed her in suspense. At the rear of the house they came in sight of a barn lot, at the back of which stood a barn much larger than the house. In the lot were four men and a horse. The horse had his four legs tied together in an indiscriminate bunch as he lay upon his heaving side. The four men were keeping the animal from bouncing up into the air. One sat upon his neck. Another held his tail.

Mrs. Le Brune called to the men: "You can get one or two of his legs loose, now, here is the gentleman that has agreed to subdue him."

Jansen Moore felt a cold sweat break out upon his forehead. "Come on," said the man perched upon the beast's neck. "You've got to take my place as soon as arry one [illegible]hem legs is loosed. Is your life inshored?"

"No, it isn't," said Jansen Moore, stopping short.

"What do you want done here?" called the man at the tail.

"Is the horse vicious?" asked Moore, cautiously approaching the lot-fence.

"You read our advertisement, didn't you?" said Mrs. Le Brune in surprise. "He crippled my best hand last week from mere wanton cruelty, simply slipped up behind him and tried to trample him down."

"He is a small animal to be so strong," remarked Moore, trying to decide upon some course of action.

"Yes, he is strong enough," returned the mistress of Whiteoak Farm. "Yesterday we found him in the house."

"How old is he?"

"Five years old."

"And your uncle, Mr. Boliver Bering was killed in the house four years ago?"

Mrs. Le Brune's face changed. "What has the horse to do with my poor uncle?"

"I don't know," said Moore with a judicial air, "perhaps much, perhaps nothing. Mrs. Le Brune, you have mistaken my personality. I am not a subduer of vicious horses,—far from it, entirely removed from such a thing. I am a—er—your daughter came to us yesterday——"

"What!" exclaimed the lady in amazement. "You are the detective?"

"Well," said Jansen Moore, "when Miss Le Brune came yesterday and laid bare the sad tragedy in the life of her family——"

"Are you the detective?" demanded the other sharply.

"I am," said the young man desperately.

"Then why did you not tell me so?"

"You seemed to know why I was here, and that I was coming," said Moore. "You took charge of me the minute I entered the yard. How did I know you mistook me for a horse-trainer?"

"True. I beg your pardon. Then let us return to the house; I suppose the trainer will come by-and-by. It was all my fault."

Moore's conscience prompted him to say, "I should have introduced myself at once, but when you invited me to take off my coat——"

"Yes, yes, you are entirely excusable, or rather, I am altogether to blame, Mr. Zellers," she said kindly.

"I am not——" said Moore.

"Pray do not advert to it again, Mr. Zellers," said the lady with a gentle smile so like Sopha's that Moore almost fell in love with the mother. "We will have to get acquainted all over, Mr. Zellers, and on the right footing."

"I——" stammered Jansen Moore, "I said I was a detective——"

"The whole world knows it," said Mrs. Le Brune as they stepped upon the piazza. "Come in, Mr. Zellers."

"But I am not Mr. Zellers," said Moore, bravely. He said to himself, "After this she won't believe I am anything."

"Ah, excuse me," said Mrs. Le Brune smiling. "Of course, as you are now entered upon your professianal duties, you prefer to be known as Mr. Keeneyes. That is just and delicate, also. At home you are Mr. Zellers, but to the world you are Mr. Keeneyes. Have a seat, Mr. Keeneyes."

They were in the cool parlor, through the windows of which a rose-scented breeze was deliciously wafted.

Jansen Moore sat down and mopped his brow with an agitated hand.

CHAPTER VI.

Jansen Moore was greatly embarrassed to be mistaken. His difficulty was great. Mrs. Le Brune had first mistaken him for a horse-trainer, then for Keeneyes. Now, when he undeceived her, what would she think?—that he was an imposter, a tramp, an adventurer? Be the consequences what they might, he must declare himself to be Jansen, and with a miserable sinking of the heart he cleared his throat to make the plunge, when the lady of Whiteoak Farm said:

"I am surprised that my daughter did not return as soon as you, Mr. Keeneyes. But her letter, which came this morning, evidently on the same train that brought you, intimates that she expected to see you again today at Banks to finish her interview."

"Yes," said Moore, "but it was best for the detective to hurry here immediately and he—I—you have made a—a mistake about me; I am——"

"I hope you did not bring young Mr. Moore with you," said the lady confidentially. "My daughter tells me that when she went to lay the case before you there was a young man present named Moore."

"Yes," said the latter, "Jansen Moore."

"My daughter was much displeased with his manner," said Mrs. Le Brune.

"He has the manners of a savage," said Moore bitterly.

"She did not seem to find them so," returned the lady; "on the contrary, he was too eager in his address. He was too self-assured. I do not know how to explain it better than reading you a part of her letter."

"I beg you to do so," said Jansen Moore gloomily.

Mrs. Le Brune got the letter, and having mumbled over the first page to herself, said, "Now, here is the place:

" 'There was a young man present whom Mr. Zellers said was his assistant. His name is Moore. I found him as disagreeable as Mr. Zellers is charming. Not that he meant to be rude; on the contrary, he wishes to be too friendly. He forced himself upon me when I went back to the boarding house, so that I could not escape his escort. He even went upon the porch with me and there he shook hands in a silly fashion. He thinks he is handsome and is inordinately vain of his mustache. I do hope, mamma, that Mr. Zellers won't bring him to Whiteoak Farm. If he does, you must find some way to discourage his assurance.' "

Jansen Moore gasped, caught his breath and then said grimly, "Your daughter has certainly read Moore's character to the very punctuation marks."

"My daughter," the other apologized, "did not expect me to read you the compliment she was passing upon yourself, Mr. Zellers."

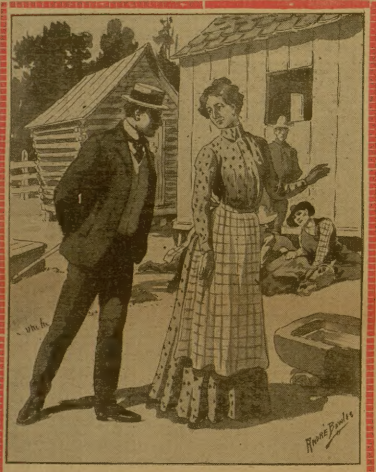
"I appreciate it all the more," said the young man still grimly. "I read her heart without her intending me to do so. Thank you very much."

"Mr. Zellers," said the lady persuasively, "did you bring that Mr. Moore with you?"

"Well—yes, mo'm—yes, I did," Moore hesitated. Then he added, "It was really necessary to have him. Otherwise I should have left him at home. He is a most insufferable cub, vain, upstartish and self-assured; but the beast is rather intelligent, and this case calls for an assistant."

"I trust you can keep him in the background while my daughter is at home," said Mrs. Le Brune a little anxiously.

"I will do so, I will do so. And now, Mrs. Le Brune, not to inquire at present into the death of your uncle, which I have already pretty thoroughly sifted, I desire to ask if you have owned that vicious horse since his birth?"



"What, you are the detective?"

"We have, Mr. Zellers."

"Has he always been vicious?"

"He has always been very spirited and wild, but we did not know he was vicious till this year."

"Ah," said Moore, trying to look like Keeneyes. "And did he ever get into this house before last week?"

"He has broken into the hall several times."

"Might he not have entered the house on the very day your uncle was killed?"

"The animal was here on the farm, but no one spoke of its having done so."

"Ah," said Moore profoundly. "Good. Excellent. I think I had better return now to my assistant, and confer with him over a clew I have unearthed."

"Mr. Zellers," said the lady eagerly, "is it possible that after the lapse of so long a time, you have been able to discover something new since coming to Fenceville?"

"Madam, I have," said Moore, rising. "I have learned something very vital, very vital indeed."

"Let the blow fall where it may!" cried Mrs. Le Brune with energy. "If those who married slew my uncle and are living now in happy married life as the fruit of that crime, let the blow fall where it will."

"The blow will fall," said Moore with deep solemnity, "and it will fall, madam, where it will!" With this profound saying, Jansen Moore took his leave. He hurried to Fenceville and found Keeneyes in their room at the hotel.

"I thought," said Keeneyes peevishly, "that you were not coming back till dusk."

"Get your mind out of your biography," said Moore abruptly, "for you'll need it in making future history. Listen here, Mr. Zellers, I went out to Whiteoak Farm——"

"And they found you out, eh?"

"They mistook me for you."

"What!" cried Keeneyes in displeasure. "But you set them right?"

"No, I didn't. Mrs. Le Brune still thinks I am Keeneyes, and I left her telling the farmhands so."

"She thinks you are me?"

"Yes, and she made me promise to keep you in the background during her daughter's return."

"Keep me in the background?" exclaimed Keeneyes.

"Yes."

"But I won't be kept in any sort of a background!" cried Keeneyes.

"I was afraid you wouldn't," mourned Jansen Moore. "Well, it's all up with me then. But go ahead. Expose me. It would come sooner or later, of course."

"Jansen Moore," said Keeneyes, thrusting his autobiography into his valise in a forcible manner, "what does this talk of keeping me in the background mean? I say, what does it mean?"

"Just this, Mr. Zellers. It seems that Mrs. Le Brune was expecting a horse-trainer this morning and when she saw me——"

"But you said you wouldn't let anybody see you," snapped Keeneyes.

"I wish nobody had!" Moore groaned.

"I wish I had kept you shut up in this room," retorted Keeneyes. "Well, she was looking for a horse-trainer and when she saw you, she thought you were the trainer. And you didn't undeceive her. But when the time came to begin the training, you thought that a good time to tell the truth, eh? So you told her you were the detective, and she jumped to the conclusion that you were me, and you let her jump, eh?"

"That is all so, but you haven't the [illegible]st, Mr. Zellers. She had a letter there from her daughter and she read it to me, and it abused me for everything she could think of; abused me for forcing my company—my company upon her; abused me for being vain of my mustac[illegible]ere's a razor? Did you bring yours? Never mind, I'll hunt up the barber presently—abused me for shaking hands with her at parting—and to tell the truth [illegible]was like drawing a tooth to let go of her hand, and after I'd heard all that roast, I hadn't the nerve to speak up and say, 'I cannot tell a lie, I am Jansen Moore.' So she thinks I am Keeneyes, and she thinks I am going to keep you in the background."

"But the moment Miss Sopha appears on the scene," said Keeneyes, "she will undeceive her mother."

"Oh, I suppose so," Moore acquiesced miserably. "I wish I were dead."

"You would certainly be less troublesome if you were," said Keeneyes. "Now, keep still and let me think this over." The celebrated detective closed his gray eyes, stretched his long, thin legs out and locked his toes. Presently he said sleepily, "You didn't find any clews out there, I suppose?"

"I judge so," said Moore. "That vicious horse they've had five years—sometimes it gets into the house. Why couldn't it have been in there four years ago? Why couldn't it have given the old man a kick to lay him out? And why couldn't it have dragged the body from the kitchen to the parlor? In this case, no human being is responsible for the death."

"Moore, did you think of that all by yourself?"

"I did."

"Then we will let Mrs. Le Brune think you are Keeneyes, and I will keep in the background as long as Miss Sopha will let us. Keep mum. Now, will you promise to stay in this room until I come back?"

"I will," said Moore humbly.

Keeneyes was gone about an hour and a half and Moore felt the need of dinner acutely before his room door opened to the light touch.

"No dinner yet," said Keeneyes, seating himself. "I have two more facts to hand you. The first is a note I have just sent to J. J. James."

Jansen Moore groaned.

"I will read you a copy of it:

" 'My Dear Mr. James:

" 'The last time I wrote you I asked you to come to Mrs. Le Brune's barn between the hours of 10 and 11 tonight for an interview.

" 'I beg to advise you that since writing that, I have unearthed a valuable clew. I am now convinced that Mr. Boliver Bering was killed by a kick from the vicious horse on the farm; was dragged by said horse from kitchen to parlor, and, therefore, no human agency was at work during the tragedy.

" 'In view of this remarkable discovery, it will not be necessary for you to come to Whiteoak Farm at the late hour specified. And, being pleased to be able to think better of you than I at first thought possible, I beg to remain yours truly,

" 'JANSEN MOORE.' "

There was a deathlike silence in the room for several minutes. Then Jansen Moore, carfully controlling his voice, said, "Why do you insist upon putting me in the light of an antagonist to this J. J. James?"

"I hand you the fact," said Keeneyes serenely; it is for you to infer why."

"And again," said Moore slowly, "how can you write a note and sign my name to it without my knowledge or consent?"

"My dear fellow," said Keeneyes, "this is not your name; you are Richard Zellers, better known as Keeneyes; I am Jansen Moore. I am the fellow to be kept in the background. You are the star actor."

"But—" cried Moore loudly.

"But," Keeneyes interposed hastily, "the note is sent; it's a fact now; there's no use to try to argue it away; it's done. Now I have a second fact to hand you. Here is a copy of a telegram I have sent Miss Sopha Le Brune at Banks, Mo.:

" 'Miss Sopha Le Brune:

" 'On your return home, you will find Jansen Moore pretending to be Keeneyes, and Keeneyes will be masquerading as Jansen Moore. This is absolutely essential to the success of the case. Do not reveal the truth even to mother. ZELLERS.' "

"I like that," said Moore. "So after all, Mrs. Le Brune will go on thinking me Keeneyes. And I will keep in the background, if possible. But please don't hand me any more facts. That note you forged to Sopha's guardian——"

"But it is not forgery, my friend, for you are now Keeneyes and I am Jansen Moore."

"But J. J. James knows better, and you represent me as being convinced that Boliver Bering was killed by a kick from the vicious horse, when it was merely an idea that occurred to me."

"Well, well, the note is a fact. Let us go to dinner."

This extremely interesting and humorous story of detective work will be continued in next week's Ledger. You will miss a great deal of amusement, as well as much mystery and exciting incidents, if you fail to read this capital story to the close. Thousands are subscribing for the Ledger each month, so that they may read regularly the great stories appearing constantly in its pages. We would like to have your name on our list. Look at our premium offers on pages thirteen and fifteen and see if you do not want one of our King Cameras or six of our spring patterns. They are forwarded to you entirely without charge.

A Cold Day.

We have a few subscribers who put us in mind of Tom Jones whom the Swede collector said had promised to pay his account in January. As the story was told, the Swede returned from an unsuccessful trip and told the boss that "Yim Yohn say he vill pay when him sell his hogs. Yim Smit he vill pay when he sell him wheat, and Tom Yones say he vill pay in Yanuary."

"Well," said the boss, "that is the first time Tom ever set a time to pay. Did he really say he would pay in January?"

"Vell aye tank so," said the Swede. "He say it been a colt day when you got dat money. I tank dat been in Yanuary."

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

Earlie—Papa, what is a hypochondriac?

Professor Bighead—A hypochondriac, my boy, is a person who has no disease, but many complaints.

A Dainty Little Maid.

Every one ought to have her. She is dressed in pretty colors and changes the color of her skirt herself when it is going to rain. She indicates when it is wise to take an umbrella or wh[illegible] you can do without. She is the simples[illegible]nd best of barometers. She is an ornam[illegible], a good seller for agents, a pretty gift, [illegible] good business souvenir and us[illegible]l [illegible]ny[illegible]ne. She or one of her sisters [illegible]es postpaid with full directions for only 10 cents. W. P. Randolph & Co., 78 Dearborn St., [illegible]hicago.

An Amateur Actor's Adventure.

BY REGINALD B. ADAMS.

Love of theatricals was a passion with Percy Mackenzie, and at Stockton, Cal., his birthplace, he had taken part in many amateur dramatic performances, and acquitted himself with great credit. He had taken a full collegiate course, had graduated with honor, and intended to adopt the legal profession.

But one year of dull routine in the office of a local lawyer had disgusted him with the intricacies of the law; he withdrew from the office and went to San Francisco, with the intention of seeking employment as an actor, at any theater where he could secure an engagement, even in a humble capacity.

He was young, stalwart, fair-looking, had the address of a gentleman, and felt that he only needed an opportunity to demonstrate his ability.

It was a chilly night in December when he arrived in San Francisco. But the weather did not disturb Percy Mackenzie, his chief thought being to hit upon some way of making his histronic ability useful.

Before presenting his letters of introduction to the prominent managers, and allowing them to fight it out between themselves and decide which should have him, he determined to devote a day or two to the inspection of the Golden Gate City, the incidents here recorded having occurred about four months previous to the great earthquake of April last. So, after a hasty meal at the Cosmopolitan, he sauntered out to mingle with the throngs in the gay thoroughfares. Wearying of the bustle of Market and Kearney streets, he turned into Polk street. In several houses, as he strolled along, he heard the sounds of music and the merry laughter of children.

Homesick, lonely, he felt his heart glow under the inspiration of this mirth, and an uncontrollable curiosity seized him. The window-curtains were drawn aside, and from the opposite side of the street a full view of the young merrymakers might be had.

Percy crossed, and ascending the steps of a house almost directly opposite—a large, but gloomy, unlighted mansion, and sheltering himself from the chilly wind under the projecting porch, he enjoyed the moving spectacle with a zest that was brightened by his lonely position and dismal surroundings. He had been snugly ensconced in the doorway less than a minute, however, when the door suddenly opened behind him.

A hand seized his arm, he was drawn in, and the door closed.

"Hush! Follow me!" came a whisper, in a woman's voice.

All was dark save the faint light that made its way from a heavily shaded lamp in a back room, the door of which was open. Percy would have asked for an explanation; but the female figure was already gliding up the stairs, and, being young and self-reliant, he reflected that he would prefer to follow out the adventure, even if he should have his choice, which he had not by any means, so far as the affair had gone.

The explanation might be made as well upstairs as down, he reasoned; so he pursued the mysterious figure. It flitted before him noiselessly, and then disappeared through a doorway on the second floor, through which a faint light came out to struggle ineffectually with the darkness.

Without further hesitation, he followed into an elegantly furnished boudoir. The guide paused at a table, and turned up the shaded lamp, which had been burning dimly. Before him, with the table between them, stood a lovely woman, queenly in stature and grace of bearing, and attired with a taste that was in keeping with the refined air and haughty manner of the wearer.

No sooner did the increased light enable her to distinguish his features than the woman gave a stifled cry, and a look of horror distorted her beautiful face.

"What is this? You are not Walter Vane!" she cried.

"No, madame; I'm Percy Mackenzie, an amateur actor in search of an engagement. What can I do for you?" replied the unvoluntary guest, with a desperate assurance.

"What are you doing here? Go; leave me! You should not have come!" moaned the lady, wringing her hands.

"If you will be cool and think a little, madame," he replied, you will recollect the fact that I am not to blame for being here—that I was, in fact, dragged in."

"I mistook you for another person. Now go away," said the unwilling hostess, in great terror.

"Fear nothing. I understand the mistake," said the young man, "although I must say it was a strange one."

"Go! go!" she cried.

He bowed, and moved toward the door. A sound made him pause. The woman heard it, too. It was the opening and shutting of the hall door. A step was ascending the staircase.

She sprang forward, and laid her hand on his arm.

'Some one is coming!" she whispered, in great agitation. "You cannot go now. Stay! If you would save a woman's honor——"

"Anything to be obliging; but really, this adventure is getting to be quite dramatic," said the young man, with a coolness that was exasperating to the lady, who trembled like a leaf.

Escape to the hall was impossible. The footsteps were drawing near, and in another moment the newcomer, cautiously as he was advancing, would be in the room.

Acting on the impulse of the moment, the visitor darted into an adjoining room, the only hiding-place at hand, and had barely closed the door behind him when the second visitor arrived.

The door h[illegible] however, been left slightly ajar by Mackenzie in the haste of his retreat, and h[illegible] partial view of what went on in the [illegible] after his retirement. He kept his eyes open to events, for his position was far from reassuring.

The newcome[illegible]ntered the apartment with some caution. He was not, then, the husband of the lady, as Mackenzie had supposed.

What was going to happen now?

He began to wish himself out of the scrape. Might he not find an opportunity to steal out, glide down the stairs, and so into the street? To be taken for a thief, if caught in this plight? No, that would never do. He would stay where he was, and trust to luck.

The last visitor was a tall, handsome man, of soldierly bearing, blond, blue-eyed elegant in dress and manners, and not far beyond thirty. He cast a suspicious glance about him.

"We are alone?" he inquired.

The woman, who received him standing at the opposite side of the table, answered with a cold nod. Her air was more haughty and frigid than before.

"I was surprised that you risked leaving the door ajar for me. I took it for a good omen, Clara. Was I right?" remarked the guest.

The lady thus familiarly addressed started as if stung by the inferencees of his presumptuous tone, and replied deliberately, her petulance dissappearing as her earnestness asserted itself:

"Mr. Vane, this is the first interview we have had in three years."

"Yes, since the eve of our wedding in San Jose, when you promised to elope with me. When I appeared at the rendezvous, you refused to keep your promise, and said you were simply amusing yourself with me. Then your marriage was hastened, and took place while I was waiting at another trysting-place for you to keep your promise. So you made my humiliation complete. Oh, I shall never forget it," interrupted the handsome visitor, throwing open his overcoat, and throwing himself nonchalantly into a chair.

The woman remained standing, pale with resolution, and resumed:

"I was a silly girl. I foolishly toyed with your affections, and Heaven knows I have [illegible]d cause to regret my cruel folly. Since [illegible] marriage I have never known peace. You have pursued me everywhere with letters—in [illegible]ery town I visited, and at home. My servants have been bribed to hand me your missives in my husband's house and stranger[illegible] thrust them into my hands in the s[illegible]ets, at the opera, or in the restaurant, forcing on me a secret correspondence that is my constant terror."

There was a slight sound from the room. It was Macke[illegible]e, making a desperate effort to restrain his desire "to hit that fellow just once," as he expressed it in a whisper.

The visitor received this accusation coolly, and replied:

"True; but if you suffer, imagine my state. Is it nothing to lose the one woman you love? You may have pretended affection—I did not; I love you in earnest, with all my heart, forever."

The woman shuddered at the intensity of his tone. There was something alarming in it.

"Is he going to kill her?" thought MacKenzie, watching every movement keenly.

There was, indeed, a blaze of insanity in the eyes of the guest that would have alarmed the strongest heart. The lady quailed a moment before him, but by a strong effort of the will recovered her self-possession, and continued:

"You have demanded a private interview, that I may be still further compromised."

"Yes, I have asked this for years, confident that if I might speak with you, and plead my suffering, your own heart would judge me favorably," replied the visitor, with a fierce earnestness.

"I? Another man's wife?"

There was a perceptible softening in the tones of the woman's voice, despite the effort she made at indignation.

"His wife? No—he stole you! You are mine by right. A foolish impulse, a girlish prank, made you his. Your heart is mine!"

The ferocity with which the man said this startled even Mackenzie, who was following the dramatic scene with eager attention from his place of concealment. The visitor had, for the moment, the air of a madman.

The woman shuddered and grew pale with terror, but with a mighty effort seemed to shake off her fear, and regain her self-possession. She went on, in her former cold and haughty tone:

"Finally, to effect your purpose, you had recourse to threats. You reminded me that during my girlish flirtation I had written you letters——"

"Yes, avowing your love, and agreeing to our elopement," interrupted the man bitterly.

The young wife trembled visibly at this reminder of her folly, but with an effort continued:

"You threatened to send those letters to my husband; but you seemed to have relented, for I, though doubting you, have given you this rendezvous on the offer on your part to return my letters and cease this torture," said the lady, twitching her fingers nervously, as if eager to clutch the fatal missives.

"And I have kept my promise," returned her handsome guest. "Here they are."

He drew a packet from the pocket of his coat and placed it on the table. The woman bounded forward, and laid her hand on them. He still retained them with a firm hold, howeer, and thus they remained.

"One moment," said he. "Remember, when you take these, they are my gift, in the hope that pity may assert itself in your heart—that you may be led to a similar generosity in restoring me my happiness, as I restore yours."

Her eyes met his with a soft, languishing expression. He released the packet, and she drew it to her eagerly. Tearing off the wrapping, she ran her eyes over the dozen dainty little letters with a hungry glare, casting each into the flame of the open grate, where the fire was sending up its bright and cheering flames. The last she set on fire, holding it in her hand until it was consumed, and fell in ashes at her feet.

A glitter of triumph shone in her eyes, and her form straightened up proudly. Fixing on her guest a look of mingled scorn and hate, she exclaimed:

"Fool! My long slavery is at an end! You are disarmed, and I am free!"

"I am not disarmed!" he cried, suddenly changing his manner from tender humility to proud assurance. "I had not faith in you; I suspected your false heart. Here, I have retained the most compromising of all your letters—that proposing the elopement three years ago. It bears no date, and no one could prove that it was not written yesterday. Here it is, sealed in this stamped envelope, and bearing the club address of your husband."

The woman turned pale.

"I held this," he resumed moodily, as he replaced the letter in his pocket, "in the hope of forcing your heart to awaken to the old love; but you have shown me how false it is. Such a heart as yours, madame, is not worth the leading away, as I might lead it by the chain I hold here. But my sufferings at your hands must be avenged, and your cruel heart must have a bitter punisnment. This is my revenge."

He took from his pocket a carefully folded paper, and, shaking a greenish powder into a glass half filled with water, which stood on the table, rapidly swallowed the mixture.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the lady, regarding her visitor with a look of intense horror.

"I mean that I have taken poison," he replied wildly; "that in a few minutes I shall be a corpse. When your husband and your friends return, account for my presence as you may. Reflect that you have wrecked my life, that you have been the cause of my death!"

As he said the last words his speech became thick, his eyes rolled wildly in their sockets, he staggered, balanced a moment erect, with a horrible smile on his twitching and distorted features, and then, pitching forward, fell to the floor on his face, with a dreadful thud, and lay there motionless.

The lady gave a shriek, and rushed forward to save him. She only caught his arm, however, and the weight of his body brought her to her knees beside him. She put her arms about him and turned his face up to the light.

"Dead dead!" she frantically cried, dropping the head of the corpse in her terror.

Then, on a sudden impulse, she began an eager search of the body, ending in the production of the sealed letter the dead man had so boastfully displayed. Tottering forward toward the grate, she [illegible]ng it into the fire, and, with a hysterical [illegible]ugh, watched it burn.

As she turned she found herself face to face with Percy Mackenzie. He was pale, and evidently horror-stricken.

She trembled violently at the sight of him. In the excitement of the terrible scene she had quite forgotten the presence of an unbidden witness.

She shrank from him as from an accuser. Pointing to the corpse, she cried:

"They will say I murdered him!" and fell to the floor in a deep swoon.

Mackenzie stood for a moment, bewildered, between the living and the dead; then, suddenly arousing himself, exclaimed:

"He was a crazy scoundrel, and he did the right thing to kill himself. But to do it here! What an awful revenge if it be carried out to the end. But it shall not be if I can prevent it!"

The rash young Mackenzie made his way down the stairs, opened the street door wide, stepped out, and looked up and down the street. The darkness was intense, and not a soul was visible.

Returning to the apartment where he had passed an hour of such terrifying captivity, he, without much ado, seized the contorted corpse of the crazy lover, and, shouldering it, staggered down the staircase with his gruesome burden.

Out into the darkness he made his way, and chose a desirable spot.

The next morning the body of Walter Vane was found some distance away, lying near the haunt of bad characters who frequent one of the side streets. It seemed plain to the coronor's jury that the young man had been drugged and robbed.

Mackenzie had no inclination to reval the truth, so he did not appear to correct an erroneous conjecture. He had saved the honor of a woman, and defeated the ends of a villian or a maniac. The woman he never met or heard of again; but a month later, after he had secured an engagement as "walking gentleman" in one of the San Francisco theaters, when led to her home by curiosity, he found the house vacant. On inquiring of a servant lounging at the gateway of an adjacent residence, he learned that the occupants, an invalid lady and her husband, had gone to New York, and that the dwelling was for sale.

HER COMMENCEMENT ESSAY.

"Beyond the Alps Lies Italy"—she paused and bit her pen,
Then wrote another word or two, then paused and bit again—
"Beyond the Alps," she shook her head and softly rubbed her brow
And said: "I wish that I could map it out somehow.
I've looked at organdie and mulle and taffeta and lawn—
I liked one piece of crepe de chine, but now that piece is gone."

"Beyond the Alps Lies Italy"—she made a flourish there
And laid her pen beside the sheet with a distracted air.
"Beyond the"—"Shall I have it ruched or shall I have it plain?
They say that flounces wide and deep are coming in again;
Sometimes I think it would be nice to put on lots of braid,
And then again my fancy runs to something appliqued.

"Beyond the Alps Lies Italy"—she turned and took a heap
Of samples from the table top and studied long and deep.
"I like this rosebud pattern and this one with dots of blue,
And this with stripes invisible, I think I like it, too.
But shall I have it made up plain? It might be well, I guess,
To have it so that afterwards 'twill be a party dress."

"Beyond the Alps Lies Italy"—she pushed the page away
And murmered: "This won't do at all; I must decide today.
The mountain peaks of taffeta and organdie are high—
Beyond them, through the snows of mulle, my unsolved problems lie.
I cannot write my essay now—that trouble is my least;
The principal affairs come first—I'll write to my modiste."

WENT TO TEA

And It Wound Her Bobbin.

Tea drinking frequently affects people as badly as coffee. A lady in Salisbury, Md., says that she was compelled to abandon the use of coffee a good many years ago, because it threatened to ruin her health and that she went over to tea drinking, but finally, she had dyspepsia so bad that she had lost twenty-five pounds and no food seemed to agree with her.

She further says: "At this time I was induced to take up the famous food drink, Postum, and was so much pleased with the results that I have never been without it since. I commenced to improve at once, regained my twenty-five pounds of flesh and went some beyond my usual weight.

"I know Postum to be good, pure and healthful, and there never was an article, and never will be, I believe, that does so surely take the place of coffee, as Postum Food Coffee. The beauty of it all is that it is satisfying and wonderfully nourishing. I feel as if I could not sing its praises too loud." Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Once Is Sufficient.

"Perhaps you never noticed it," remarked the thoughtful thinker, "but it is true, nevertheless."

"What is true?" queried the party at the other end of the conversation.

"That a woman never uses her husband's meerschaum pipe for a hammer more than once," explained the t. t.

Map of the World 25 Cents.

A beautiful map, valuable for reference, printed on heavy paper, 42x64 inches, mounted on rollers, edges bound in cloth, showing our new island possessions, the Trans-Siberian Railway, Pacific Ocean cables, railway lines and other features of Japan, China, Manchuria, Korea and the Far East. Sent on receipt of 25 cents in stamps by W. B. Kniskern, P. T. M. Chicago & North-Western Railway, Chicago, Ill.

She's Dreaming.

"There goes Miss Letters. I understand she is quite literary."

"Who told you so?"

"She did."

"Ah, well, don't wake her up."

CURE FOR LIQUOR AND TOBACCO.

The Kansas Anti-Liquor Society is mailing free a recipe for the cure of the liquor habit. It can be given secretly in food. Also one for the tobacco habit that can be given secretly. The only request they make is that you do not sell recipes, but give copies to friends. Address Kansas Anti-Liquor Society, 15 Gray Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

A Natural Conclusion.

Earlie—What makes so many cattails grow in this pond, Mollie?

Mollie—Oh, they grow up from little kitties that people have drowned here, of course.

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Invention is the mother of trusts and promotion is the stepfather.

Our idea of a smart baby is one that does its sleeping during the night.

Anyway, the pace that kills always gets in its work on the right people.

It takes a skillful artist to make a speaking likeness of a dumb person.

The tongue of a flatterer either has a fool back of it or one in front of it.

If a girl can only get engaged she is seldom in a hurry to get married.

It is legitimate, though useless, to begin agitating at once for a sane Fourth.

If it wasn't for the mistakes they make some men would never be heard of.

Love is apt to make a fool of a man, but most men are willing to take chances.

Some men manage to acquire a reputation for cleverness by working what little they know overtime.

Enterprising actresses are giving up pug dogs and are now satisfied with nothing less than boy husbands as pets.

However, Corey knows that Pittsburg can be depended on very soon to do something that will cause his little adventure to be forgotten.

It took a Philadelphia preacher one and two-thirds minutes to marry a man and woman who were in a hurry. No town is likely to be slow all the time.

If a man doesn't fall in love until after he gets on the shady side of 40 he invariably works overtime in an effort to make up for the neglected opportunities.

Bryan thinks the people will never be likely to do to the railroads what the railroads have done to the people. But even such a promise may not be wholly reassuring to the railroads.

Mrs. Howard Gould insists that her husband has an income of $1,000,000 a year. It is probably safe to assume that Howard is one of the people who think it would be an outrage to have an income tax in this country.

J. Pierpont Morgan is going to tear down a $500,000 house in New York so that he may have a garden. We would earnestly advise the boys who are not familiar with his ways to refrain from stealing any of J. Pierpont's watermelons.

It is reported from Berlin that a professor has found out how to make large artificial diamonds which cannot be distinguished from the real gems. Why does any professor want to spend his time in finding out how to put diamonds within reach of the masses? The masses won't want them when they become common, anyhow.

TWO FACES UNDER ONE HAT.

By H. E. SCOTT.

Author of "The Pretty Typewriters," "The Girl from Nacoupin," etc.

[Copyright by the Author.]

Begun in No. 21, May 25. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XVI.

JOHN MERRILL.

At midday on the 27th of September, a young man dressed in the garb of a laborer entered the door of the postoffice in Denver and approached a window over which was a sign proclaiming it the general delivery.

"John Merrill" was the name he pronounced, as the face of a clerk appeared.

"John Merrill?" she repeated after him, and for a moment she disappeared. "No letters!" she announced a moment later.

The young man was about to turn away when she remarked: "Wait a moment, perhaps there may be papers."

"Possibly," replied Merrill.

"Yes," she presently said, "here is one, and I think that is all."

"Thanks," was the response, and Merrill received the package and hastily left the office; nor did he tear open the wrapper that covered the paper until he was seated on the bank of Cherry Creek several blocks distant, and then it was with hands trembling with agitation.

"A Coulton paper!" he exclaimed, as he consigned the wrapper to the current of the creek. "Doubtless from Marsh. I shall see nothing that I have not already noted in Chicago papers. Caleb Marsh doubtless intended well. Had I remained in Coulton the prospect for me looked dark indeed; but now, now my flight has proclaimed me a murderer. Ah, the Coulton Record! And dated September 21st. Here is the column that interests me:

" 'NOT YET APPREHENDED.

" 'Mark Perry, the dastardly murderer of Philip Baily, the Chicago packer, is yet at large, though the commissioners of Lundy County have offered a reward of five hundred dollars for his capture, and the murdered man's partner, it is understood, has innumerable private detectives on the assassin's trail. That both the murderer, and his accomplice, who afterwards made his escape, may soon be apprehended and brought to meet the fate they merit on the gallows must be the wish of all our citizens.

" 'That a being should exist who would thus ruthlessly murder his benefactor—who even at the time of his taking off had on his person ten thousand dollars in cash with which to take up certain mortgages that rested on the farm of the father of his betrothed, seems incredible.

" 'A fortunate thing for a confiding young lady of this county was it that Mr. Caleb Marsh and Constable Cleaver caught the assassin almost in the very act.

" 'We are pleased to state that Mr. Marsh who held the mortgages above alluded to and who had demanded payment, in view of the trouble of a worthy citizen has granted an extension of the same.' "

John Merrill was trembling with agitation when he finished reading the article.

"Fool! Fool, that I was!" he exclaimed. "Yes, to have listened to Caleb Marsh—to have accepted those files, and by flight to have admitted my guilt. Now, I alone will be sought for! The real murderer is safe—safe, and I who would have died in defense of Philip Baily, a fugitive! Oh, Kate, my love, do you, too, hold me guilty? I cannot believe it. What shall I do? What should I do? Return and face my accusers? Yes, I will—I will! I cannot lose the girl I love—I cannot bear the brand of a murderer. Ah, but the evidence will condemn me! Marsh was right, I dare not return. Perhaps in some way the dastard who committed the crime may betray himself. He has the money and the watch within whose case the name Philip Baily is engraved. I must wait! Wait, and every day will seem a year."

From the paper John Merrill again read the words: "That both he and his accomplice who aided in his escape may soon be apprehended and brought to meet the fate they merit on the gallows must be the wish of all our citizens."

"Marsh stated that he was running a great risk for my sake. I see it now. Should it be suspected that he furnished me those files, his liberty would be in danger. He has extended the mortgages—I had hoped that Mr. Horton would take them up. Can he believe me guilty? He has private detectives on the assassin's trail—on my trail, mine! No, no; the article does not state, 'on the trail of Mark Perry.' May he not have them on the trail of the real assassin? Ah, but they will visit Coulton and become convinced that I am the assassin. Time! Time alone will solve the mystery.

"I must follow out my plan, and bury myself in the mines. There is no use to wait longer for a letter from Caleb Marsh, for I feel that none will come. Marsh dare not take the risk. He sent this paper. He has acted as a friend—but is he? Is he? Why, but for him I should by this time be on trial for my life, and with everything against me. I should not doubt his friendship. And yet, he would have taken advantage of the necessities of Mr. Ellis, and coerced Kate into becoming his wife.

"Oh, God, if Caleb Marsh is false to me! Why, if he were, he had but to have aided in my conviction. The law would have removed me from his path. He must be my friend! But will he again seek to make Kate his wife? He has extended the mortgages. He has always been called a hard-hearted man; but he has not proved so to me.

"He told me I would one day return and make Kate my wife. He saw how utterly impossible it would have been for him to have won her love. I should not doubt him now. Kate has that three hundred dollars—the mortgages are extended, and they will not want. Arthur may return long before I do. I return? Ah, when? Some time, for some time the truth will come to light.

"Oh, Kate! God grant that you be true until that time arrives! And now, John Merrill, ere the rising of another sun, will be miles away from Denver, and lost even to Caleb Marsh."

Hurriedly the young man arose to his feet, and was on the point of starting away when the thought seized him: "He may write! Caleb Marsh may write! If he does, it were well that I received the letter."

Thoughtfully he stood for a moment considering his position.

"If I remain here," he determined, "I may be apprehended. Detectives in Denver may be even now searching for Mark Perry. I can write to have any mail that may arrive for John Merrill forwarded to me! This paper I am afraid to have in my possession!"

He tore it into fragments, cast the pieces into the creek, watched them disappear from view, and then strode hastily away.

CHAPTER XVII.

CALEB INVESTS MORE OF MARK'S MONEY.

John Merrill had argued rightly when sitting on the bank of Cherry Creek, reading that column from the Coulton Record, for Caleb Marsh had no idea of writing him a letter. "That article will suffice," he had thought. "He will know from whence the paper comes and after seeing it he dare not return. I am as effectually rid of him as though he had died on the gallows, and I was afraid to trust to the chance of that.

"It is much better so! I am not squeamish, but somehow I would not just like to see the fellow hanged. Fool! There he is, thinking that I saved his life! Perhaps I did; but it was to serve my own ends—that I might make Kate Ellis my wife, secure Elwood, and all the vast—well, never mind, it was well worth all I have ventured."

But a few days elapsed after Caleb had surprised Abner Ellis by placing one hundred dollars of Mark's money in his trembling hands, before Marsh called again; nor this time was he alone. A stout German girl accompanied him.

"Ah, Miss Kate, good morning!" he said, when she opened the door to admit him. "I hope you are recovering from your terrible shock, and that your father is comfortable this morning."

"Father is as usual, Mr. Marsh," was the reply. "Will you not come in?"

"Well, yes. Come, Lena! By the way, Miss Kate, this is Lena Goff, the daughter of one of my tenants. She is doing nothing at home, and winter is close upon us. [illegible] have engaged her to remain here with [illegible] as a servant this winter—she is to do the housework, milk the cows, help [illegible] wait on your father and lessen your burdens generally. Oh, don't look surprised! I have seen for a long time that the[illegible] is too heavy a strain on you."

"But we cannot afford a girl, Mr. Marsh; the work is light, and as for milking the cows—you must know that we have none."

"You are mistaken, Miss Kate, mistaken! You have as fine a cow as is to be found in Lundy County! Gives a foaming pail of milk night and morning! Look, there's a man just driving her in the gate—she's a beauty!"

"Why, Mr. Marsh, you——"

"Caleb, come right in!" called out Mr. Ellis. "I have heard every word, and I see the cow from the window! Bless your soul, I never looked for such favors from you, and after——"

"Never mind, neighbor, never mind! When one is in adversity, one finds who are his friends. Because Kate rejected me, should I turn from you in the hour of your trouble? No, no! That might be the way with some men, but it is not the way with Caleb Marsh!"

"But the girl, Caleb?"

"Stays right here, Abner, to lighten the burdens of your daughter. Can't you see the girl is working too hard?"

"Yes, yes, Caleb, I know it! God bless you, I know it!" said the old man, as he brushed the tears from his eyes. "Take her to the kitchen, Kate, and show the man where to put the cow."

"But, father——"

"We can't thrust away such friendship, child! When Arthur comes home it shall all be repaid. Run on now and leave Caleb and me to talk the matter over."

"There is nothing special to talk over, neighbor," said Caleb, as Kate accompanied by Lena passed from the room. "I have thought it all over. I have engaged a couple of men to come tomorrow and fix up the fences and outbuildings. In the spring I will furnish you with a couple of teams and seed. You can have crops enough, if we have a good season, to meet your interest, defray your expenses, and perhaps save something to pay on the principal of the mortgages—in case Arthur don't come home prepared to take them up or—ah, well——"

"I understand you, Marsh; you have not given up the hope of making Kate your wife. You have that end in view. You would yet release the mortgages if she consented."

"Every dollar, Abner; but it is too early to talk of it: She has had a great shock; but you can see that I am trying to win her."

"You are bound to win her gratitude, Caleb, if not her love. I suppose then that but for the hope of winning her you would not have extended the mortgages at all."

"I don't say that, neighbor, you must not think of it. Of course, business is business; but I couldn't be hard on the father of the girl I love, whether she ever becomes my wife or not. Just let everything drift along as it will. I am willing to trust to time. Now I must go on to town."

"I think her gratitude will impel her to become your wife, Caleb, if nothing else does. You couldn't well coerce her into marrying you."

"I wouldn't think of such a thing, neighbor. No, no! On no account. If I had that disposition I would have refused to extend the mortgages until she had become my wife. Oh, no, don't talk to her as though I sought to have you coerce her. I tell you, Abner, I love her, and I am bound to win her! You are welcome to Elwood if I get Kate! Now, good day. You will see me again soon.

"Good-by, Miss Kate! Anything I can do for you in town?"

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Marsh," said Kate, as she walked towards the front door where Marsh was now standing; "but you are doing too much for us. But for my father's sake I could not accept of all your favors. Pray, though, do not think me ungrateful."

"Then I am glad that on your father's account you accept them, Miss Kate. But really, you overestimate them. I am going to town now, and why should I not save you that long walk, if there is anything I can do for you? The day is not very pleasant."

"If I might ask you to inquire at the postoffice, and then I have a little list that I shall need from the grocery."

"By all means, get it, Miss Kate. Why, it will not delay me a moment, and if it did for hours, it would but increase the pleasure of serving you."

These words and the look that accompanied them, confirmed in Kate's mind the idea that she had already formed, that Caleb yet hoped to make her his wife, and that the extension of the mortgages and wondrous interest in their welfare were evidences of that intention.

With a sick heart she turned away, and in a moment returned with the list which she handed him.

"If you will please tell Mr. Hart, the grocer, that I will pay our bill when I come in," she said.

"Certainly, Miss Kate, certainly; and if Lena does not suit you must let me know."

"Oh, she is certain to answer any requirements of ours," she replied. "It was very kind of you. Good morning!"

"Let's see what this list comprises," thought Marsh, as his horse jogged along. "Coffee, tea, sugar, twenty-five pounds of flour and a strip of bacon. Thunder! A farmer buying flour, twenty-five pounds at a time, and bacon, when he should have a smokehouse full. Shiftless, shiftless, even if he is an invalid! Not a thing for herself. She would make me a capital wife! Yes, Abner is right. I shall win her gratitude, and that will gain her consent to become my wife. If it fails, why, then it will have to be: 'Either your hand in marriage, or I foreclose and your father goes a pauper into the street.' The first plan is the best.

"Let's see, I must add to this list. No cows; they have no butter—never mind, I will send a tub of that from home; but what shall I add? Girls generally like cake and sweet things. Two pounds of raisins, two of mixed nuts. Candy? Why not? Two pounds of mixed candy, five pounds of rice, one kit of mackerel, one ham. There, that's a mixture, and I may see something else.

"Gods! here's where the murder was committed! Go on, Prince, go on! It makes me shudder to pass this place. That grocer will notice that all the articles were not written down by a female hand. Well, hang the difference. I think I will invest a little more of Mark's money today, and the way he would have me. No harm in that, even if I do get all the credit.

"Now, of course, I will inquire at the postoffice. I have authority, and now I will inquire every day when I am in town. Mark Perry dare not write; but there might be something that it would be to my advantage to see. Thunder! Horton might drop a line! I must be on guard."

It was nearly four o'clock when Kate heard a slight rap on the door. She hastened through the hall and opened it. A large basket piled full of bundles confronted her, and Caleb Marsh was half-way back to his buggy.

"Why, Mr. Marsh!" called out Kate.

Caleb raised his hat: "You must excuse me, Miss Kate, but it is time I was home. You will find the packages all there. Good evening!" and he hastened on, and in a moment was driving rapidly away.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Kate. "I never ordered all these things! Why here is a kit of mackerel, too! What ails Caleb Marsh? Lena!"

"Yes, miss!"

"Help me bring this basket in. Gracious, it's heavy!"

"It should be," called out her father, "by the way Caleb was bent over carrying it. It's a bushel basket. The contents, I judge, will cost something."

"Why, I only ordered five articles, and here are at least a dozen. Oh, here is an envelope. I suppose it contains the bill. Yes, here it is:

" 'To bills rendered—$34.00.

" 'Goods, as ordered delivered to Caleb Marsh this day—$18.50.'

"Goodness, father, that man is crazy! We cannot afford that. Why, here is a list of the articles—Coffee, tea, sugar, bacon. I ordered those. But mercy! one ham, one kit mackerel, five pounds rice, one barrel flour, ten bars soap, six cakes toilet soap, two pounds raisins, two pounds mixed nuts two pounds candy, one gallon pickles, one pound smoking tobacco, one-half gross matches. Oh, father, there are lots of other articles, and the grocer adds that the flour will be delivered in the morning!

"Why, the total due is now fifty-two dollars and a half, and—father, the bill is receipted! What can that mean? 'Payment received in full—Edward Hart.' Lena, will you please feed the chickens for me? Crazy, father! Mr. Marsh is crazy!"

A low laugh answered her. "Not a bit of it, Kate! Caleb Marsh loves you, and he yet hopes to make you his wife! Can't you see it? What but love for a charming girl could change a nature as hard and cold as his? You are the only one who ever found a way to his heart! You should be proud of your conquest."

"He knows I never can become his wife, father."

"And loves you still, instead of seeking to crush us. For your sake, he is seeking to make our condition more bearable. Marsh has certainly shown qualities I did not suppose he possessed! Well, when Arthur comes home he shall not be forgotten. He will have my son's gratitude to his dying day!"

"He certainly has mine, father; but my love is——"

Kate nearly pronounced the forbidden name—Mark Perry, and she brushed aside the tears that sprang to her eyes at thought of him, as she commenced unpacking the basket.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"HE HAS BEEN A SON TO ME."

During the winter months Caleb was a frequent visitor at Elwood farm, and on two occasions Sarah accompanied him. It is needless to state that she had been clad in her finest apparel. She had remained at Elwood until her brother had driven into town and returned; nor had she neglected to sound his praises with all her capacity.

"Caleb has for years been a misunderstood man," she had said. "His business methods have made him seemingly hard and cold, when in reality, a man with more feeling, or of a tenderer, truer nature, does not live. He is as gentle as a child to those he loves, and to smooth your pathway in life, Miss Kate, the dear soul would almost mortgage his own possessions.

"That is saying much of a man whose sole ambition in life heretofore, has been to acquire wealth. Poor boy, he never lost his heart in his younger days. But now, now it is in your possession. You have no idea how that man worships you! How he honors you for your devotion to your father. It is marvelous even to me, who knows his nature so well.

"I can never forget how for your sake he hoped against hope that Mark Perry would not prove to be a murderer, and would establish his innocence. That very night, when he returned from town leaving the young man in jail, the cold-blooded murderer made his escape and there was no longer a chance for hope."

"Never mention his name again, Miss Marsh, in my presence, never! It is one forbidden in this household!" exclaimed Mr. Ellis.

"I do not wonder," said Sarah. "He nearly wrecked your lives—but of course he no longer holds a place in the esteem of your daughter?"

"What, a murderer? Impossible, madam!"

Kate, who had been feeling very uncomfortable, turned away to hide the tears that would well up into her eyes. "Mark! Mark!" her heart cried out. "You are not guilty, and I love you yet!"

"My heart is often sad," continued Sarah, "when I contemplate the lonely condition my poor brother will be in when I am called away. I am much older than my brother, you know, and my years must be near numbered. Oh, if I could but see him happily married to the charming girl he loves with his whole heart, I could die content; but not winning her, my brother will never wed. Love, I think, comes to such natures as his but once. It is——"

Here Sarah Marsh raised her handkerchief to her eyes, but peeped beneath, through the open door at Kate who was now setting the dining-room table to see if her words had had any effect on that young lady.

" 'Faint heart never won a fair lady,' you know," observed the farmer in a low tone of voice. "I think Caleb is making progress. Your brother knows I do not oppose his suit. His course towards us, I think, would win a heart of stone. I would gladly see my Kate his wife, gladly!"

"Any young la[illegible] in the land might be proud to becom[illegible] wife," replied Sarah.

"True, true, [illegible] I don't think he need be discouraged. [illegible] course, he is many years Kate's senior, [illegible]"

"Oh, better an [illegible] [illegible]s darling, Mr. Ellis, than a young man's slave. And then, Caleb is not so [illegible]. He comes of a long-lived race. Such a man is young at forty-five."

Now all this conversation within the hearing of Kate, who had given all the love of her young heart to one who was now a fugitive, was not very pleasant. She became aware of it, though, that Sarah Marsh as well as her father favored Caleb's suit, and while she felt that her father would never try to coerce her into marrying Caleb, she foresaw that the time would come when the problem would again confront her:

"Either your hand, Miss Kate, or your father must give up Elwood!"

She realized that Caleb's generosity to her father was prompted by a hope of winning her consent to become his wife. "He can be generous," she thought; "that is more than I would once have believed. He has given us relief that no one else could or would. It is not strange that he believes Mark guilty, when no one else is in doubt. He doubted that until Mark fled, nay, had avowed his friendship for him, and stated that he would expend one thousand dollars in his defense.

"It is not strange now that he believes Mark a criminal, that having wished before to make me his wife, now that fate has removed him from his path, he seeks my hand again. The fact that my love was given to Mark he overlooks—all men could not do that. I wish father would not accept all his favors. And yet, how else could we have survived?

"That he loves me there can be no doubt. I should be grateful for all he is doing for us, even if he does seek my hand. If he did not love me he would not have extended the mortgages. Even now we would be homeless. Oh, Mark! Mark! I am very miserable! If Mr. Horton had but taken up the mortages; but he did not, and not a line from him. He, too, must believe you guilty! Surely, Caleb Marsh alone has stood between us and poverty. And yet, my heart rebels against him! Oh, the end! What will it be?"

The long winter months passed by, with Caleb yet as attentive to the necessities of the inmates of Elwood farmhouse as he was the month following the tragedy at Sandy Run. It was at his expense that the woodshed was from time to time replenished—to be sure, the wood cost him nothing, save the chopping and hauling; but Caleb knew when the store was getting low. Hardly a trip did he make to town but that he found something that he thought would add to the comfort of Abner or his daughter; and then he always called on his return to report that there was no mail and to leave the papers.

"She can't refuse me after all this," he thought. "She will be bound to marry me through gratitude; but it will cost me more than Mark Perry's money. Well, I know what I am about, and it is the best way."

The 15th of March Caleb sent two teams accompanied by drivers to commence the spring's plowing. The weather by that time had moderated sufficiently to permit Abner to spend part of his time out of doors, and he grew almost young again when he saw four fine horses in his stables, and realized that the whole place was to be planted once more.

"Marsh, you are a true friend!" he exclaimed. "Now if Arthur will only come home this summer and find every acre of the old place green with a growing crop and prepared to lift those mortgages, there will be a happy family here. Ah, Caleb, love has made another man of you. It has softened your nature and brought out your good qualities. I have not a doubt now but that you'll win Kate. Yes, and then you'll release the mortgages, even if my son does not return by the time they are due."

"Certain, Abner, certain! I never will violate my word. You think then that I am gaining headway with her?"

"I know it, Caleb! Ain't I always praising you, and don't I often hear her remark: 'What would we do, father, but for Mr. Marsh?' Of course, she knows that it is because you hope to make her your wife, but she sees the love you bear her, Caleb, in your actions. Oh, you will win her."

"I am throwing away a devilish lot of time if I don't," thought Caleb, "to say n[illegible]g of the expense. Well, the farm will pa[illegible]at back. I am bound to have that, anyway."

About th[illegible]first of April Mr. Ellis had an unusually poor spell, and Kate, becoming alarmed, sent a message by a passerby, requesting D[illegible] Doan to visit him.

It was [illegible]ening and the lamps were lighted in the house when the doctor arrived. He had called at Elwood but once since Mark's esc[illegible]e from jail, and that was the day following that event.

"This is sad business, Mr. Ellis," he had said on that occasion; "there is a mystery about it that I am unable to fathom; but though all the world condemn Mark Perry, I do not believe him guilty of that murder."

"His name is forbidden here from henceforth," replied the farmer. "His flight is proof of guilt," and the farmer changed the subject.

"He is ashamed that his daughter was engaged to become Mark's wife," thought the doctor. "Well, time may develop many things."

Now on this occasion the doctor found Abner seated in his reclining chair, suffering from an attack of asthma with which he was at times troubled.

"Oh, I shall soon have you out of this," he said. "It is nothing serious. I judge you have been moving about too much on the farm now that you have plows running again. Everything seems to have taken on new life at Elwood."

"It has, doctor, it has, and all because of the kindness of Caleb Marsh! No son could have been more attentive to us than he has been."

"Son? Brother, you mean," observed the doctor. "You could scarcely have a son of his age—but you surprise me! I always supposed Marsh incapable of caring for the needs or necessities of others."

"I mean son, as I said," exclaimed the farmer. "Caleb is only in his prime. I tell you, doctor, he has been a misunderstood man. He might have been the owner of Elwood right now, and would have been, had he not extended the mortgages that hang over the place and given me another chance. And that after my daughter had declined the honor of becoming his wife."

"Declined the honor of becoming his wife? You astound me! Is it possible that that old crab sought the hand of your lovely daughter? I do not wonder that she declined him. Why, you——"

"Not a word against Marsh, doctor! I can't bear it. He has been my best friend ever since that terrible affair. I would be quite content to see Kate wedded to him. No one will ever know all he has done for us."

"He is amply secured for all he has expended, I presume," said the doctor.

"Secured? You don't know, doctor! Of course, his mortgages cover the amount he loaned on the farm and the interest which is long behind, but he has nothing to show for two hundred dollars in cash that he has thrust into my hands since the murder to defray household expenses with—nothing to show for as much more that he has paid on outstanding bills that were crowding me. His teams have kept us supplied with wood during the winter, his money has started the plows you see running on the farm and will furnish the seed that goes into the ground and pay the labor—I tell you he has been a son to me!"

"Well, the crop will secure him," said the doctor.

"Secure him? Why, yes, and meet the interest; perhaps enable me to lay something by to apply on the principal; but don't you see—he has given me a chance to save Elwood until Arthur comes home?"

"I should never have expected it of him," remarked the doctor. "Perhaps he yet hopes to make your daughter his wife?"

"I expect he does! I know he does! His love for Kate is what has softened his heart. You are an old friend, doctor, and knew me when I was a prosperous man, or I would not tell you this: The day Kate becomes his wife, he releases Elwood without a dollar!"

"Oh, ho! He would coerce your daughter into marrying him! He would have Elwood and its fair mistress, too, when you are gone!"

"Doctor, you are crazy! Arthur is to have Elwood. He is alive and will return."

"I doubt if Marsh thinks so."

"Folly, doctor! You do the man injustice! You don't know Marsh. There are no more like him, I tell you that, and as for coercing my daughter—are his actions those of a man who seeks to coerce? No! He would win her heart, and failing, he will go to the grave a single man. Such is his love for Kate."

"Remarkable!" exclaimed the doctor. "Now it strikes me, somehow, that Caleb Marsh is a man with two faces under one hat. A man who has grasped for wealth all his life, and remorselessly sold out a hundred mortgaged homes right here in Lundy County, showing no quarter or consideration, is not a man to let the passion of love interfere with the accumulation of his dollars. There is something about this matter that I do not understand; but good evening, I have tarried too long."

"Love is a power, doctor; but I agree with you in one thing. Marsh certainly has carried two faces under one hat. One has been the face of a cold, calculating, business man! That is not the face he brings with him to Elwood. Here, the other one has proved to be the face of a true friend, a benefactor, and a would-be son-in-law, to an infirm old man."

"He may be all you think him," said the doctor. "Good night."

"Good night, doctor! Remember all I have said to you was in confidence."

"Certainly!"

"What of my poor father, doctor?" asked Kate, as he was passing through the hall.

"Oh, I will have him out in two or three days, Miss Kate. He is in no danger. By the way, have you ever changed your mind in regard to Mark? Do you yet believe him to be innocent of the crime of murder?"

"I do, doctor—unless he had lost his mind. I know he little dreamed of committing that bloody deed when he left Elwood that morning."

"Nor did he, Miss Kate! Nor did he; but his name may never be cleared. He may remain a fugitive all his life. He believed the evidence would hang him. An opportunity presented itself for him to escape. He fled—few men would have done otherwise. To me, his flight was not an evidence of guilt, but by it he set at rest all doubts that had existed in the minds of others. Should he ever be apprehended, I think nothing could save him from the gallows."

"Then pray God, he may never be apprehended!" sobbed Kate. "Oh, Mark! Poor, dear Mark!"

"He never will be," said the doctor, as he disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER XIX.

A CONDITIONAL ENGAGEMENT.

"It is getting about time for me to ascertain something of Kate's mind," thought Caleb, as he drove from his gate one morning in the early part of May. "It is but a little more than four months now until the mortgages are due again, and there must be no more extensions. If I have not won her by fair means in this time, I never shall. I must have a talk with her at once. Perhaps she will accompany me to town."

Kate had been thinking of going to Coulton for some time, and as the day was fine she decided to avail herself of the opportunity.

Abner Ellis smiled contentedly as Caleb drove from his gate, his daughter seated beside him. He now looked on it as a foregone conclusion that the day was not far distant when the couple in the buggy would be man and wife.

Caleb said nothing of the subject that was uppermost in his mind on the trip to town. Arrived there, he left Kate at a dry goods store where she desired to make some purchases. "I am going direct to the postoffice," he said, "and will inquire for you. It will save you that walk."

"Oh, thank you," was the reply. "I have not been to the office for some months."

"I don't intend you shall go there for months to come," thought Caleb, "if I can help it. Here," he said, handing her an envelope, "is a memorandum of some things. I will call back for you in a half-hour, or I will meet you at the sheriff's at twelve o'clock. How will that do? They will be glad to see you, and I promised to call there."

"I will be there, Mr. M[illegible]," was the answer. "A memorandum? Oh, from father! Strange he did not give it to me. Mr. Marsh!" but Caleb was half-way across the street.

The envelope was not sealed, and Kate hastily opened it.

"Gracious!" she exclaimed, "a twenty-dollar bill! What is this, a note? Oh, the memorandum! Only five words: 'To the girl I love.'

"Goodness! From Caleb Marsh—I, I wish I had remained home today. I very much fear that the time is drawing near when Mr. Marsh will be asking me a very important question. I do not love him. I never can; but he has done everything for us, and father, while he will not urge me, would be a happy man if I were to wed Caleb Marsh. His heart seems set on it.

"Best not let the alternative arise again: 'Your hand, Miss Kate, or Elwood.' If I am to become his wife, it had better be without his again presenting that alternative. Oh, my poor old father! Only for you, a dozen Elwoods would hardly induce me to become Mrs. Caleb Marsh. And yet that man loves me. Strange! No, I don't know as it is, either. Mark used to say I was handsome. I wonder if I am?"

A smile wreathed Kate's lips at the thought.

"Beauty and the beast! No, I will not do Mr. Marsh that injustice. If I am no beauty—he is surely no beast. I will venture he will be good to me. I cannot use his money, but there are lots of things I need. Oh, Mark! how far apart a few short hours thrust us, and never to meet again."

It was three o'clock when Caleb accom-

(Continued on page fourteen.)

ELEGANT LACE AND EMBROIDERY TRIMMED WHITE WAIST 94c

WE ARE HEADQUARTERS FOR MUSLIN UNDERWEAR

As a special adv. for our great ladies' clothing dept. we will sell 6,000 of these elegant regular $2.00 lace and embroidery trimmed white lawn Shirt Waists at 94c—less than ½ regular price. This superbly stylish short sleeve shirt waist is elegantly made of choice white lawn valenciennes lace insertion and lovely embroidery. The beautiful circular yoke is a dainty panel of lawn at neck and two rows of exquisite valenciennes lace insertion and beautifully embroidered lawn panels, extending to shoulder seams. Directly below yoke appear 3 rows of rare valenciennes lace insertion and a profusion of charming fine tucks. Back opening is harmoniously trimmed on sides with lovely tucks. Attached collar and cuffs are an exquisite combination of fine lawn and valenciennes lace insertion. It's a dainty, superbly stylish and bewitchingly chic shirt waist, and you will fall in love with it the minute you see it.

WRITE TO-DAY FOR OUR GREAT FREE FASHION CATALOG

Send us 94c and 6c extra for postage ($1.00 in all) and we will mail you this elegant lace and embroidery trimmed white lawn shirt waist subject to approval. If you like it and think it equals any $2.00 shirt waist you have ever seen, and is as pretty and stylish as any shirt waist you ever saw at any price, keep it. If not, send it right back and we will promptly return your $1.00 and you will not be out one penny. Order the waist to-day or write for our BIG, FREE, SPECIAL FASHION BOOK, which shows over a thousand elegant pictures of rare and beautiful spring and summer styles of shirt waists, tailor-made suits, jackets, capes, skirts, petticoats and immense assortments of dainty muslin underwear and children's and infants' garments, millinery, shoes, and boys' clothing, at startlingly low prices.

JOHN M. SMYTH CO. 150 to 207 West Madison Street CHICAGO

MONEY Made quickly by smart men. F. Gemco, 117 Nassau St., N.Y.

DETECTIVES Shrewd, reliable man wanted in every locality, to act under orders; no experience necessary. Write M. C. Webster, Indianapolis, Ind.

Evelyn Nesbit POST CARDS, 62 different poses, 10 for 15c; 20 for 25c. Case Mere. House, 1416 N. 20th, St. Louis, Mo.

PATENTS. Send for Inventor's Primer. Milo B. Stevens & Co., Attys. 869 14th St., Washington, D.C. Established 1864. Branches: Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit

A SONG "HIT" will make you rich. Send us your poems. Cash or Royalty for available manuscript. WAINWRIGHT MUSIC CO., 78-72 Evergreen av., Chicago

GENUINE TAFFETA PETTICOAT of excellent quality, only $4.98; reg. $7.50 value. Special PREMIUM OFFER on Panama Skirts. SOLID GOLD "BEAUTY PIN" ABSOLUTELY FREE. Write QUEEN QUALITY CO., DEPT. C, ST. LOUIS, MO.

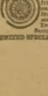
OPIUM or Morphine Habit cured. Free trial treatment. We specially desire cases where other remedies failed. Confidential. HARRIS INSTITUTE Room 589, No. 400 W. 23d St., NEW YORK

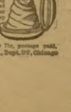
CORNS

CORNS WILL COME BACK every time you cut them. Stop it and use A-CORN SALVE. Removes the whole corn, roots and all. Quick, safe and sure. 15c, at your druggist's or by mail.

Giant Chemical Co., Philadelphia.

McGINTY WATCH





Greatest fun maker out. Looks like a regular watch. Plated hunting case with chain. When asked the time you can paralyze your friends by pressing the clasp and "Up jumps McGinty from the bottom of the sea," right in their face. Everybody has to laugh.

Sample 10c, 3 for 25c, 12 for 75c, postage paid. UNITED SPECIALTY CO., 94 Dearborn St., Dept. 92, Chicago

A UNIVERSAL FOOD

Following Nature's Footsteps.

"I have a boy two years old, weighing forty pounds and in perfect health who has been raised on Grape-Nuts and milk.

"This is an ideal food and evidently furnishes the elements necessary for a baby as well as for adults. We have used Grape-Nuts in large quantities and greatly to our advantage."

One advantage about Grape-Nuts Food is that it is pre-digested in the process of manufacture; that is, the starch contained in the wheat and barley is transformed into grape-sugar by exactly the same method as this process is carried out in the human body, that is, by the use of moisture and long exposure to moderate warmth, which grows the diastase in the grains and makes the remarkable change from starch to grape-sugar.

Therefore, the most delicate stomach can handle Grape-Nuts and the food is quickly absorbed into the blood and tissue, certain parts of it going directly to building and nourishing the brain and nerve centers. "There's a Reason."

Made at the pure food factories of the Postum Cereal Co., Ltd., Battle Creek, Mich. Read the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Then She Wept.

Mrs. Newlîwed—I made a big batch of these biscuits today.

Mr. Newliwed—You did, indeed, dear.

Mrs. Newliwed—How do you know how big a batch I made?

Mr. Newliwed—Oh, I thought you said "botch."

Sensible.

The One—Where are you from, stranger?

The Other—I'm from St. Louis.

The One—Shake! I'm always glad to meet a sensible man.

The Other—How do you know I am sensible?

The One—The fact that you are from St. Louis proves it. Otherwise you would be there yet.

The Saddest Words.

Of all sad words of tongue or pen
The saddest are those to the bargain maid:
"They have cut the price in two again,
And it's twice as cheap as what I paid!"

How He Proposed.

Mr. McDooley—Faith, an' it do be a question Oi have fer yez, me darlin'.

Miss Clancey—Pfwat is it, Pat?

Mr. McDooley—Whin it comes toime fer me funeral, how would yez loike t' be th' Widder McDooley?

His Idea of It.

Teacher—Earlie, what is capital punishment?

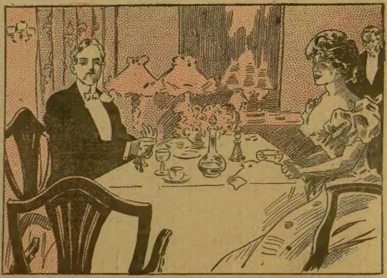
Earlie—It's when a kid is naughty and his mother locks him in a dark closet where there's plenty of cake.

Egotistical.

Him—Won't you give me just one kiss?

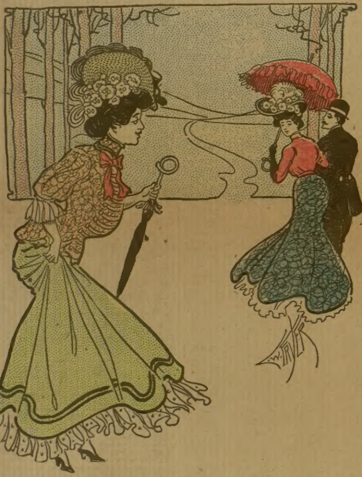
Her—Yes. I'll give you one—if you'll promise to not ask for another.

Him—Oh, after the first one you'll do the asking.



Mrs. Meekton—What do you think, James? Mother says she wants to be cremated.

James—All right; tell her to get her things on, and I'll take her down now.



Jack—You are holding your parasol on the wrong side to protect you from the sun.

Evelyn—Yes, I know it; but there is that horrid Miss Snub, and I want her to see my new hat.

The Captain Kicks.

"Dis mollycoddle business makes me tired," grumbled Tommy Tuff, captain of the Gashouse nine.

"What are you talking about, sonny?" asked the man who was waiting for a car. "Why isn't your team playing today?"

"Why ain't dey playin', mister? I'll tell you why dey ain't playin'. Half de kids had to wash dishes dis morning and der hands are so soft dey couldn't hold any-t'ing harder den a codfish ball. What's de nation comin' to anyway?"

And the captain of the Gashouse nine was so disgusted he tossed his bat at the speckled goat and went home.

Her First Thought.

When an automobile runs over a man,
He rants and swears as loud as he can;
And feels for the skin that is peeled from his face,
And vows that his ribs are out of place;
But a woman don't hunt for bruises or swear;
Just shrieks: "You chump, you've mussed my hair!"

Within the Law.

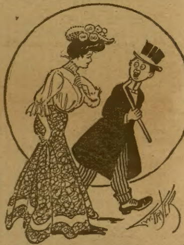
Wild-eyed Man—I want a lot of poison, right off.

Drug Clerk—It's against the law to sell poison to people who look as if they want to commit suicide; but I'll let you have a bottle of Doctor Black-Sequin's Elixir of Life. That seems to be pretty sure dea[illegible]

Disappointed.

Inquisitive—If, as you say, you knew this man to be a rake, why did you invite him to your house?

Henpeck—Heavens, man! [illegible] dreamed he would elope with my daughter; I thought he would carry off my wife.



She—You always talk about such silly things.

He—I'm always talking about you.

The Wife Knew.

Mrs. Hayfork (in country postoffice)—Anything for me?

Postmaster—I don't see nothin'.

Mrs. Hayfork—I was expectin' a letter or post-card from Aunt Spriggs, tellin' what day she was comin'.

Rural Postmaster (calling to his wife)—Did ye see a post-card from Mrs. Hayfork's Aunt Sally, tellin' what day she was comin'.

His Wife—Yes. She's comin' on Thursday.

Encouraging.

He had been worshiping at her shrine for several moons, but was somewhat backward about coming forward.

"No," he said one evening when they were alone in the parlor, "I never had a sister and I don't believe I'd care to have one."

"Well," she rejoined in a tone redolent with encouragement, "you'll never have a better opportunity to not get one."

Never Touched Him.

"Now, sir," said the irate creditor, "I'll ask you for the last time when you intend to pay me?"

"Well, thank goodness," rejoined Slopay, "that's the last time I'll hear that silly chestnut."

Out Completely.

"The truth will out," we're told, and, oh,
How frequently we find
The truth will out of some men so
It leaves no trace behind!

Why It Was Boiled.

Mrs. Outskirts—Is it really true that you boil the city water before using it?

Mr. Park Rowe—Yes, you see it's not quite thick enough to bake or fry.

Post Cards Get a set of Comic Post Cards and send them to your friends. Every card new, colored and a corker. 10 cards, 10 cents; 20, 25c; 30, 25c; 50, 40c. By 100 lots 75 cents per 10. Address CLYDE L. GALBRAITH, Eminence, Mo.

He Was a Thinker.

"My good man," said the lady missionary, "do you ever pause to think where you are going?"

"Sure t'ing," replied the unlaundered hobo. "Ef I didn't I might git on de wrong freight an' land back at me startin' place!"

Striking an Average.

Jenkins—Smartly has bought an absolutely noiseless auto.

Woodson—Indeed.

Jenkins—Yes. And he's got the noisiest horn in town attached to it.

No Health There.

Mrs. De Fashion—So you were at Health Springs during the summer. How did you like it?

Mrs. De Style—Well, the place is pretty enough, but I didn't think much of the water. It didn't taste bad at all.

Anticipation and Realization.

"There's always more joy in anticipation than in realization."

"I don't know."

"Have you never realized it?"

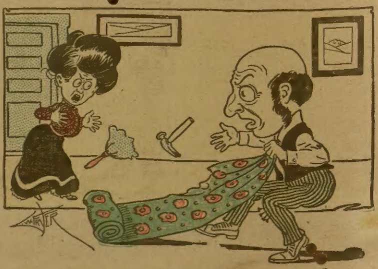
"I don't know; I am anticipating a visit from my mother-in-law."

Cause and Effect.

Passenger—You say there was a big washout on this road last week.

Conductor—Yes.

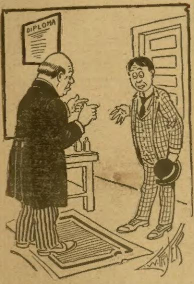
Passenger—Huh! Some of the water must have leaked out of the stock.



My eyes and nose are filled with dust,
My face begrimed with smut;
My fingers are all badly smashed,
My mouth is full of soot.

My knees are [illegible] full of tacks,
My back is broke with pain,
My temper, too, is ruffled up—
I'm cleaning house a[illegible].

JOLLITY
WEIR



Doctor Killum—You should send your mother-in-law to a warmer climate.

Nervisse—You do it, doctor, with chloroform or something; nobody will suspect you.

Pessimistic.

Marriage is a problem
That's difficult to face;
At best a doubtful heaven,
At worst—the other place.
The motives that inspire it
Are more or less complex;
Chief among them is the bunch
Of the fools in either sex.

The Limit.

Biggs—The Dopsons are very exclusive, I understand.

Diggs—Yes, indeed. Why, they even have wire screens on their doors and windows so their flies can't get out and associate with the flies of their neighbors.

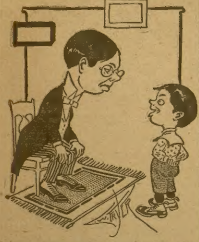
As Indicated.

"I saw a rattlesnake fifteen feet long this morning," said the summer boarder.

"Heow did yew know it wuz a rattlesnake?" queried the old farmer.

"By the way my teeth rattled when I saw it," replied the summer boarder.

Her Reply.



Percy—Willie, did you—aw—tell your sister that I am waiting?

Willie—Sure.

Percy—And what did she—aw—say?

Willie—She said you ought to get a job like that in a restaurant.

Dark Future for Baby.

"How much do you ask for a bathtub for a child?"

"From $1.60 to $10."

"W-h-e-w! We'll have to go on washing baby in the coal scuttle till the prices come down."

Old-Fashioned Skimming.

Manufacturer—Didn't have much success in selling the farmers automobiles, eh? Then they didn't care much about skimming along at a great speed?

Salesman—No; about all they care about skimming is milk.

T[illegible]e Point.

Jim—I hear y[illegible] had a quarrel with your telephone girl.

Jack—Yes, a[illegible] [illegible]ke our engagement.

Jim—What did she say?

Jack—Ring off.

The Tailor's Joke.

"Are you sure this piece of cloth will stand wear?" asked the man who was selecting a spring suit.

Yes, sir," replied the tailor. "Why, we call that kind of cloth 'mystery.'"

"Why so?"

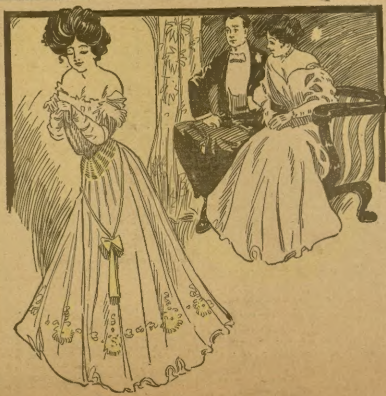
"Because it is so hard to unravel."

Professional Advice.

"What your husband needs most," said the family physician, "is complete rest."

"Where would you advise us to go?" queried Mrs. Gabbleton.

"I'd advise him to stay right here at home," replied the M. D. "That is, if you can arrange to go away for a few weeks."



Miss Tapp—I heard you say she had a complexion like a doll.
Mr. Nocker—Perhaps you did.
Miss Tapp—But a doll's complexion won't stand water.
Mr. Nocker—Neither will hers.

Professional.

"Are you certain you can cook well?"

"Madam, I worked two years for the great tenor Alberti. At the last dinner he gave I was applauded after each course, and at the end of the dinner I was recalled three times."

Absent Minded.

"You have three pairs of glasses, professor?"

"Yes, I use one to read with, one to see at a distance, and the third to find the other two."

By a Cynic.

Fair woman's mind is ever clean,
Whichever way she ranges it;
Which is b[illegible]t natural, I ween,
[illegible]or she so often changes it.

Maria and the Echo.

"So you and your wife visited the Mammoth cave on your honeymoon?" said the close friend.

"Yes," replied Mr. Stubb, reminiscently, "and, by gum, we had to pull Maria out of the cave forcibly."

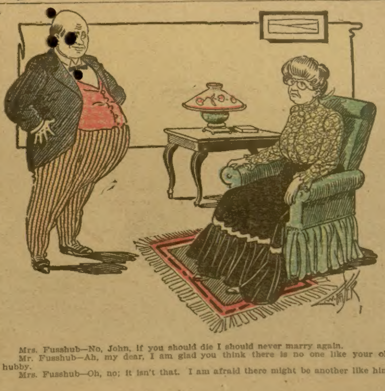
"Gracious! I suppose she was fascinated with the beautiful stalactites?"

"No, it wasn't the stalactites. You see there is a wonderful echo in the cave and Maria couldn't bear to think of the echo having the last word."

Room for a Bushel.

Jack—It takes a large measure to hold a bushel, doesn't it?

Eva—Not always. A girl can send a bushel of kisses in the smallest envelope you ever saw.



Mrs. Fusshub—No, John, if you should die I should never marry again.
Mr. Fusshub—Ah, my dear, I am glad you think there is no one like your old hubby.
Mrs. Fusshub—Oh, no; it isn't that. I am afraid there might be another like him.

Mean Man.

"George," chirped the young wife at breakfast. "I read where some loving and poetical husband actually wrote a poem on his wife's biscuits. Now, dear, if you want to pay me a pretty compliment, why don't you write a poem on the biscuits that I bake?"

"It would be impossible," laughed the cruel husband.

"And why, George?"

"Because the biscuit you make [illegible] so hard they wouldn't take the ink."

And then the trouble began.

On the Honeymoon.

"So you were well pleased with the train on which you took your wedding trip?" said the bosom friend. "Was it an accommodation train?"

The young man's face beamed with delight.

"I should say it was an accommodation train," he confided. "Why, the porter put the lights out every time we reached a tunnel."

AGENTS WANTED

Nearly all the readers of The Ledger will find these advertisements of interest to them. There will be found among them some excellent chances of making money by selling goods to friends, neighbors and others. Those seeking such an opportunity either as a regular or temporary occupation, should write the advertisers whose offers follow.

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AGENTS, CREDIT, Perfumes, Flavors, etc. Big profits. Express Paid. Terms Free. [illegible] AGENCY Co., Box 282, Sta'n L, New York

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AUTOMATIC FISH HOOKS
Catches two fish to common hook's one. Fish are caught by even touching bait. Write today for our ONE HOOK FREE offer. Agents wanted. Hawk Specialty Co., Dept. 40, Des Moines, Ia.

Energetic Men Wanted
In every locality throughout the United States to advertise our goods, tacking up showcards on trees, fences and along roads; also distributing small advertising matter; commission or salary $83 per month and expenses $4 per day. Steady employment; no experience necessary. Write for particulars. Address WM. R. WARNER MEDICINE CO., London, Canada

AGENTS WANTED
200 Per Cent Profit. Sell our Big $1.00 bottle Sarsaparilla for 35 cts. Best Seller. Finest Medicine. Complies With Pure Drug Law. Everyone buys. Write now for terms.
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In every town to take orders for Custom-made Suits and Overcoats from $11.00 up, and Trousers from $3.50 up. Big commissions paid and large Sample Outfit in traveling case furnished free to those who can do business. You can make big money working for us. Write at once for Sample Outfit. The Warrington W. & W. Mills, Dept. 50, 178 Adams St., Chicago.

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BIG MAIL FREE!
POST OFFICE
Would you like to get a lot of letters, circulars and packages? You probably know that manufacturers, supply houses, wholesalers and publishers buy names and addresses for the purpose of sending samples, advertising matter, papers and circulars to. Good names and addresses are hard to get and are quite expensive. We publish an AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST containing names and addresses carefully arranged in alphabetical order. We send these Directory Lists to concerns we know are anxious for good names to send advertising matter to. Write your name very plainly so the printer will not make a mistake; be sure to give your street number and town also plainly written so that any mail addressed to you will reach you without fail. We have been publishing the Agent's Directory List for several years and refer to the editor of this paper who will tell you we are reliable. All we ask is that you send 10 cents in silver and we will enter your name in our Agents' Directory List as above stated. Write today. Address
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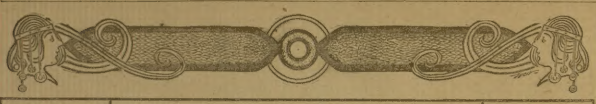

By
WILLIAM H. MANNING.

THE TREASURE BEARERS;

Or
THE HAWK OF THE FURLAND.

[Copyright by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 20, May 18. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XX.

DARKNESS AND DANGER.

It was midnight. The air was balmy, and stars shone unobscured in the heavens. Inanimate nature seemed to sleep. Yet, the woods had their sounds. The four-footed creatures prowled, and they stirred leaf, plant and branch as they went. Under their feet dry limbs cracked and loosened stones rolled. Of their number some were beasts that threaded the wilds in search of prey.

But the woods were not wholly given up to the brute order. By the lake shore was a thicket, and in the thicket crouched a human being who kept a weary vigil.

After the treasure had been buried on the point by Lazare Colot he had guided Helen to the mainland, unseen by Jason and his immediate followers. There, after a period of inactivity, it was determined that, despite all risks, Lazare should go to Spur Island for tidings of Roger Severn. To avoid discovery the way must be made circuitous, long and weary. He must swim long stretches, so Helen could not keep him company.

Both knew this, but Lazare admitted it with great reluctance.

All other devices failing, they went two miles from Jason's camp, and there Lazare took his departure, while Helen remained in hiding.

Since then hours had passed. Day had waned and gone. Night had come and far advanced. And still the voyageur remained absent. In Helen's mind anxiety had long since given place to acute fear. Fully persuaded that something serious had happened to Lazare, she dared not leave her cover, and yet feared to stay.

In this painful crisis Barbe was her one comfort and protector. In both respects he was a strong tower. He had been as uneasy as she. He had mixed periods of stolid composure with minutes of great restlessness. At times his eyes were full of dancing light, his nose outstretched and his muscles a-quiver. Often she discovered that this was caused by the wild things of the forest, but, sometimes she was wholly at fault, and Barbe could tell little that was in his dog mind.

His restless manner grew with night, and the comfort of his presence was alloyed by the fear that his manner heralded the coming of human foes.

Midnight came without trouble, but a change was at hand. Again the night had a voice and the woods their sounds. Something moved to the north Barbe stirred and growled softly. His pointed head was thrust forward, his powerful body quivered. Helen shivered, but kept her arm in its old position around him, and mechanically caressed him.

The sounds grew in volume and came nearer. She peered out of her cover and saw distinctly, the figure of a man. He moved forward, and after him came others. Dark shadows of the dark forest, they spread out fan-fashion and covered a considerable strip of ground.

And they seemed to be searching for something.

Helen was filled with terror. Convinced that they were her foes, she shivered and was powerless to move. That which made Barbe's muscles tense made hers lax. She was ready to sink with fright.

The leading man paused a few yards away.

"Hurry on!" he directed.

Helen gasped weakly. It was the voice of Jason Bardell.

"Coming, coming!" growled a second man, and she knew it was Louis Gouin who answered.

"We are wasting time," added Jason, irritably. "I told you this was a fool's errand. Get out of the bushes at once and let us begone."

"Have your own way, stubborn-head!" snapped Gouin.

He hastened his speed, blundering along recklessly and crashed through the bushes angrily.

Helen barely suppressed a cry. His course was directly toward her cover. She quivered and was helpless, but Barbe quivered and was full of belligerent fire. Brave and faithful, and ready to die for his mistress, if need be, the wolf-blood in his veins acquired the ascendency and he was full of ferocity as his wilder ancestors.

Gouin plunged into the thicket.

There was a deep growl, a forward leap, and the voyageur fell back prostrate with the dog at his throat.

The calm of the preceding minutes was interrupted rudely. With the growls of the dog were mingled the wild cries for help uttered by Gouin, and it was a thrilling medley.

For a little while even Jason lost his power for coherent thought, but he soon discerned that it was no wood animal they had to deal with, and a suspicion of the truth flashed over him.

"To the rescue!" he cried. "Forward, Carrel, forward Deroux!"

A moment of hesitation, and then there was a general dash to the scene of trouble. United, the men broke into the thicket—and into the trouble. Louis Gouin called for help no longer, and Barbe was free. He met the invaders like a panther. Jason was knocked down by his rush, and Deroux found his teeth tearing at his thigh. Then, when Tiery Carrel would have used his knife, his forearm was griped by the deadly jaws and the weapon fell.

The assailants soon had enough. It seemed to them that a score of dogs raged in the thicket. A sharp set of teeth and a volley of growls appeared to be at every corner and in all places between. They who had entered the bushes in haste went out far more rapidly. A rush, a confusion of outcries, an eager use of legs and feet, and they were in full retreat and anxious to keep at it.

Louis Gouin remained behind.

The fight, and the husky breathing that came from where Gouin had fallen, were too much for Helen. She found the power of motion; she sprang to her feet; she called to Barbe and turned toward the darker forest. The bushes parted and she was gone.

A rod, two, three rods she went heedlessly, and then a lithe form glided to her side. She looked down and saw Barbe. He trod beside her with a bold, free step, and if the fire of battle still burned in his veins he gave no sign of it. Yet he had eyes for all around them, and if the darkness had been less his fangs might have been seen gleaming between his parted lips—the same fangs that had dragged Gouin down and put Jason to flight.

Helen went aimlessly. She did not realize that she had taken the way to the heart of the forest, nor did she pause to reason as to what consequences would follow. Her one idea was to get away from Jason Bardell, and her course was a wild, aimless flight.

On, and on! On over rocks and logs, through thickets and brooks, down hill and up acclivity—on in long-continued haste. And where she went Barbe kept her company.

When she stayed her steps it was because nature had been drawn upon to the limit. Weary, weak, breathless, strengthless, she dropped to the ground and lay panting and sobbing nervously.

Barbe came and stood over her. For a time he whimpered as if a human mind directed him, but, presently, he ceased this useless exhibition and fell to licking her face to tell of his dog love and devotion. She reached up; she clasped her arms around his neck, and, hugging him close, broke into husky speech.

"Oh, Barbe, Barbe! noble and good and brave! I live, and owe all to you. My friend, my champion! Good dog, good dog! —heaven gave you to me for my salvation. Barbe, Barbe!"

She fell to sobbing for love of him and from gratitude, as she had sobbed a moment before from pure nervousness; and though he did not have the power of understanding every word, Barbe gave responsive affection in his dog-fashion and was happy.

Presently he lay down by her side, and she pillowed her head on his shaggy shoulder and breathed a sigh of deep relief. Despite all that the partisan had told her in the past concerning the dog she had not before realized how great his strength, bravery and devotion were. Now, knowing, she conquered her late panic and felt secure.

Soon, too, her danger seemed to grow less, and the shadows of her situation to lighten and draw away. Calmness succeeded fear, and trouble was forgotten. Sleep had come to her exhausted mind and body. She slept, and Barbe was her pillow.

When she awoke the sun was shining and the barking of a dog rung in her ears. She leaped up and stood transfixed with surprise and joy.

Before her stood Roger Severn and Michel Pera, and Barbe was leaping on his master.

Afterwards it was hard to recall what ensued with clearness. She remembered the great pity in the partisan's face as he looked on her drawn countenance and torn, mud-soiled garments; she remembered that he came forward and expressed that pity in words that fell unsteadily from his lips, and that, anon, she grew clearer of mind and ralized that, if she had fared so well with Barbe as a protector, she was well nigh safe when both Barbe and his master were there.

She heard, too, the partisan's story of his escape from Spur Island, of his journey with Torcex to Beaver-tail point, and how he had found an empty camp there; but that the body of Francois Lasure had been discovered just beyond, where the ledge lined the neck of land, and what grave fears he had felt in consequence.

Then, too, there was the account of the chance meeting with Michel Pera, and the loyal support the voyageur had promptly given his captain; and the search for her through the night, and the final discovery.

She told her story, and fresh questions arose. Where was Lazare Colot? Plainly, he could not have reached Spur Island before Roger left. But why had he not returned to her?

Pera shook his head gloomily.

"It would be a long swim even from the best place on other land that he could gain. Maybe Lazare is all right, but—but"

"May Providence preserve him!" exclaimed Helen. "I owe him undying gratitude!"

Somewhat later she asked Michel to go to an adjacent hill and look over the surrounding territory, and when he was out of hearing she told Roger about the treasure, and of its burial on the point by Lazare. Instantly a new impetus was given to Roger's thoughts, and he grew full of ambition to hasten to the burial-place.

Unconsciously, Helen had wandered in a semi-circle, the previous night, and they were still near the lake. The partisan determined to get to the treasure camp as soon as possible, and, calling Michel back, they began their return; not forgetting that Jason and the mutineers were liable to be there yet, but willing to take all risks.

They were within a few yards of the water when Michel abruptly paused and raised a warning finger.

"Oars!" he whispered, briefly.

The sound came distinctly to all ears. Roger advanced a step, parted the leaves before him and looked beyond. What [illegible] saw amazed him.

His second boat was advancing, with Alexis Michel in the steersman's s[illegible]t, and cl[illegible] beside him were David Ridley, Baptiste Proue and Louis Chardonnais, in addition to the regular crew.

The partisan broke from co[illegible]r, ran to the shore and shouted to his lieutenant. There was an answering cry, and the boat was headed their way and d[illegible]ven to land. Alexis seized his superior'[illegible]hand, and David, leaped out and Baptiste and Louis hastened to follow his example.

It was a reunion long to be remembered, albeit one of confusion and many questions and answers. In time, Roger knew all that had happened to his allies.

Alexis had been on a long, fruitless race down Winnepeg River, sent by a message found on a point of land, and signed by Severn's name. This mesage told him that Roger had escaped the storm and had gone on, and had bade him follow with speed. He had done so, only to decide, eventually, that he had been tricked; after which he returned.

"You were undoubtedly sent astray by the same person who led me to go to Spur Island by a like message," said Roger. "But who wrote them "

"Do you remember," asked Helen, after a pause, "that Peter Korway had a companion? He called him John Dongan. That man kept to himself, and we have seen next to nothing of him, but he was a crafty-looking man. What has become of him?"

"He was not with the Express, when I met him on my return," replied Alexis. I do believe you have named the writer of the messages."

Roger echoed this opinion, but there were other things to consider, and the subject was dropped for the time.

Alexis, returning, had seen a strange object drifting down the lake. Investigated, it proved to be Ridley, Proue and Chardonnais, tied fast to a bouyant floating tree and left to their fate. He had rescued them, and their story was soon told.

Jason had handed them over to his Chippewas with orders to dispose of them permanently, but the Indians had selected a plan of their own. Tying the helpless men to the tree they had launched it on what they believed would be a fatal voyage for David and his companions, but fate had ordained otherwise.

As soon as this rapid exchange of adventures was made, Roger took David aside and told him of the burial of the treasure by Lazare Colot, and it was determined that they should go to the point at once. They now had men enough to depend upon. True, some of Alexis voyageurs were men of dubious appearance, but they were likely to go with the tide, and it was setting strongly against Jason.

All of the party entered the boat and the trip to the point was begun. On reaching the shore Roger and Baptiste went on to reconnoiter, and it was soon found that Jason, his followers and the other boat were alike gone. The point was deserted.

It was still necessary to keep from even the most loyal men the fact that a treasure was under consideration, and Roger planned accordingly. He ordered all of his party ashore, and bade them prepare breakfast and eat. With preparations under way, he, Helen and David left the others and went on their eventful errand.

Helen had no trouble in finding where Lazare had built his fire when she was with him. The place was soon reached. Dead ashes covered the earth plentifully.

"This is the spot she eagerly announced.

Roger looked with some concern. If treasure lay beneath the ashes the concealment was surprisingly poor. Bits of fresh soil lay above and mixed with the ashes, giving tell-tale evidence. And yet, Lazare was a veteran of the wild-lands.

Without expressing his fears he fell to digging, and knife and hands soon produced an ever-growing excavation. Helen and David stood over him with eager faces and acute interest.

Deeper and deeper went the digger. The loose earth was easily cast up and the way was still downward. Gradually, however, a shadow came to Helen's face. She had seen this hole dug, and it seemed to her now that Lazare had not gone so far down in his work.

Roger was getting ideas of his own, and the climax came when he reached hard ground—ground which, plainly, had not been disturbed in many years. He looked up and met two blank faces.

"The treasure is gone!" Helen exclaimed.

David suddenly sprang forward and picked up something at one side.

"It is Jason's glove!" he cried. "That arch-villian has been before us. He has stolen the treasure!"

CHAPTER XXI.

HEMMED IN.

When the baffled treasure-seekers rejoined Alexis and his men they were outwardly calm, and Roger's expression was resolute and suggestive. After breakfast the voyageurs were called together and addressed by the partisan. He briefly told them that Peter Korway and his associates had stolen the first of the boats, and that he was determined to recover it. Peter must be found.

This announcement met with the enthusiasm usual to the voyageurs when matters were to their taste, and the way looked promising for united action. Proue, Chardonnais, Pera and one of Alexis' men were selected to go on a scout, and when they departed the others setled down to wait. Roger had denied himself the satisfaction of going because he felt that his place was near Helen.

Two hours later the scouts returned. They had found the missing boat, and Jason and his men, without being seen in return.

The party were on an island near the east shore, but their camp was not a place of harmony and good will. As near as the spies could tell, the Chippewa adherents had demanded that the inland pieces be opened and the contents divided, while Jason, Carrel and Deroux were opposing the idea, but laboring as an imperilled minority.

Jason was finding his mixed acomplices unruly associates.

Roger acted at once. Hastening to the boat, they embarked and put away as soon as possible. The voyageurs rowed with zeal, but not with the usual accompaniment of chansons. Silence and secrecy were then vitally necessary, and the craft cut the water with scarcely a sound to betray its progress.

The journey was soon made and the island neared. It was well-wooded and its center was not open to view from the water, but the advancing party looked in vain for signs of life.

"Strange that there is no sentinel!" muttered David.

"Possibly the trouble in camp is responsible for that," suggested the partisan. "In any case, we need not demur against the lack. Land quietly, voyageurs!"

The boat was driven ashore and all disembarked. Baptiste Proue was told to lead the way, and he went on without hesitation. Presently he enjoined greater care, and, creeping forward, they had view of the camp. Crouching in the bushes they waited and watched.

Roger and David quickly had a surprise. They saw Lawyer Jameson, whom they had supposed to be in Toronto. His bonds told a part of his story, but not why he was in the fur-land.

Jason was there, the central figure, but not one of power. With Carrel and Deroux by his side, he in the midst of other men, halfbreed voyageurs and Cheppewas, who scowled upon him and, having superiority of numbers, were in open rebellion. Weapons were drawn, a[illegible]d it was clear that Jason's situation was p[illegible]carious, yet he remained outwardly calm.

His courage was wor[illegible]y of a better cause.

"Let me say [illegible] you[illegible]en," were his first audible words, "that you are making a great mistake. What [illegible] you do get pos-

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session of the inland goods? Where can you sell them?"

"We can use them."

The speaker was Jameson's traiterous voyageur, Pascal. False to the lawyer, he and Georges now aspired to overthrow Jason and, with the more ignorant Chippewas—whom they might perhaps dupe later —have all the plunder to themselves.

"Much good kettles, pans, shovels and hoes will do you!" scoffed Jason readily.

"You were ready enough to steal them!" retorted Pascal.

"But I know where to dispose of them."

"If we can't do the same, you needn't worry for us."

"Oh! but what is needed here is unanimity!" cried Jason. "If we all stick together we can reap the fruit of our enterprise and be free from trouble. Why not? Ah, lads, think of the pleasure of having plenty of money in your pockets. Why, it means times at Selkirk, Toronto or Montreal so jolly that we can drink the inns dry and break all the gambling banks. Why not?"

"Because we can do all this without you," growled Pascal.

Jason swept his gaze over the circle of faces. He could not see any evidence that he was making an impression, but his courage remained unshaken. Not so with his expectations. He read the signs of the hour and knew that these revolters had doomed him to death.

Yet, he held his head as high as ever.

"You can not do all this without me!" he declared.

"Why not?"

"Because I happen to know that Parkinson, partisan of the Express, has learned of trouble here and has turned back. He comes to chastise those who would rebel against Roger Severn."

"Bah! That won't go down with us. The men of the Hudson's Bay Fur Company turn back for no man."

"Not usually," admitted Jason; "but in this case they will and have. Why? Simply because, owing to need of extra supplies this trip, the Hudson's Bay Company is half-owner in the pieces in the Oakley boat. That I know; Severn told me himself. That, lads," continued Jason, assuming a very friendly air, "is the truth of this matter. Beware the great company! Look to it that you don't have them at your throat like tigers. Whom the company dooms, dies!"

It was a brave fight, but Pascal remained unmoved.

"Lies will not save you!" he harshly declared. "The company has not one piece in the Oakley boats. Tell it to the addlepated! Not to us. Besides, if it be true, why do you steal their pieces and invite their wrath?"

"Oh! I am in with Parkinson. He is not so good a company man as the company thinks. He and I have laid a scheme——"

"Bah!" cried Pascal. "We will hear no more lies. Am I right, men?"

Georges flourished his knife.

"Down with Korway!" he shouted.

There was a forward movement, but Jason, hemmed in, helpless, doomed and desperate, still kept his outward coolness and looked them in the face steadily. Knives and pistols menaced him, and yet he did not give way an inch nor lose his easy manner.

"Wait a bit!" he directed. "I have one thing more to say. Men, I know of treasure—buried treasure—fifty thousand pounds sterling!"

Pascal and Georges jeered in chorus.

"And I will lead you to it and share with you," finished Jason, with an air of candor. "Give me one hour and I will make you all rich."

"And we," retorted Pascal, "will give you five minutes to get ready for another world. Peter Korway, lies will do you no good. Your hours are numbered. You die!"

Roger Severn had listened with bated breath. Villain that Jason was, this brave struggle against odds appealed to [illegible] strongly. It was in his mind to fling his own followers upon the opposing force before mischief could be done to Jason, for he supposed him to have the treasure; but something like fascination delayed his action.

Now, Alexis touched his captain's arm.

"Look!" he directed.

Roger obeyed. Up the slope came two men, and he recognized Lazare Colot and Louis Gouin. The latter, swathed about the neck where Barbe had torn him, and ghastly pale, staggered and would have fallen at times but for Lazare's supporting hand, yet he labored on with stubborn determination.

Helen breathed a deep sigh.

"Lazare, a traitor?" she murmured. "I will not believe it!"

Nearer came the two until only a few yards separated them from Roger and his party. Then Lazare paused.

"Here we part, Louis," he said quietly. "I must seek for Severn."

"Have it as you will," replied Gouin huskily. "I am sorry I ever jeered at you in the past. Good-by! I go to Korway!"

He staggered on feebly, and so entered the circle of quarreling men. Jason saw him, but did not at once notice his swathed throat and uncertain movements.

"Welcome, Gouin!" he cried eagerly. "I am glad to see you. There is trouble here. Stand by me!"

The voyageur swayed and seemed about to fall, but his eyes blazed with new fire.

"[illegible]" he returned, "so you have use for [illegible] you? I am welcome when you [illegible] trouble, am I? How was it when [illegible] tore my throat in the thicket? [illegible] you? Who ran away and left [illegible] fate?"

[illegible]

[illegible] struck a chill to [illegible] bad enough be- [illegible] is most reliable man [illegible]

[illegible] stare.

"No, [illegible] Gouin, 'you did not look [illegible] see. [illegible] left [illegible] a mangled and worthless brute. How I suffered! I bled, and only kept life in me by holding fast to a severed artery. Soon I grew athirst but I could not move a step. Struck down maddened by need of water and burning with fever—and deserted by you! Long after came another man who gave to me drink, bound my hurts and brought me here. A hard journey it was, but I toiled on and on. I—I wanted to see you before I died. Before I die? Oh! I need not have died had you came back when the dog was gone, to see if life remained in your old partner in crime. Man, man, when I thirsted and lay in torment I swore to be revenged. Yes, and I am here, Jason Bardell!—here to take a life for a life!"

He handled his pistol in an uncertain way and swayed more than ever, his face growing ashen.

"Louis, [illegible]" cried Jason, "[illegible] thought you [illegible]"

"I shall [illegible]!"

Gouin raised his pistol [illegible] [illegible] and fell [illegible]

It was barely a second later [illegible] pitched forward and dropped bes[illegible]

With an effort Roger threw [illegible] that was [illegible]

"[illegible]"

He led the way, and Alexis and the other voyageurs dashed after him. The surprise was complete, and the result [illegible] not less pronounced. Menaced by a superior force, the allies turned and ran. In this wild flight Carrel and Deroux kept together, while the Chippewas [illegible] second detachment. No one made better speed than White Wolf. He had followed Jason from Chocoloxie, but had been a traitor at the end, and now he deemed speed more desirable than valor.

No one sought to check the flight, and all hands were soon seen swimming toward the eastern shore.

Gouin had ceased to breathe, but Jason yet lived. He had a fatal wound, and life ebbed in his veins. It was that his minutes were few, and David went to his side.

"Jason," he spoke persuasively, "will it not help you across the dark river if you state where the treasure [illegible]"

First surprise and then triumph came to the dying man's visage.

"So you have lost it!" he whispered exultantly. "Good! I triumph at the end. Where it is I don't know. Neither do you —did you say? Aha! I die—he gasped feebly; his gaze wandered and then came back, and with a last ray of light in his eyes, he repeated: "I die—a victor!"

His voice ceased; his head sank lower. Jason had gone to the unknown world.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TREASURE.

David rose and found Roger by his side. They looked at each other in brief silence, but eloquent as this regard was, the agent was not content to limit matters to silence.

"After all, the treasure is lost!" he finally exclaimed.

The partisan was not ready with a reply.

"It's gone!" pursued David gloomily. "Only Jason could tell, and he is dead. Oh! that we could make his still lips speak!"

"We must do something equally effective," steadily responded Severn. "We must find the treasure. Lazare buried it, and Jason dug it up. His natural course would be to bury it again, but in another place. Now, we know he has not been far away, and we must cover all the ground he could possibly have visited after he got possession of it."

"Possibly he sunk it in the la[illegible]"

"Then we must drag the lake."

"Captain, your courage beats mine. I am in despair. I see no way to find it [illegible] thus ends Asa Bardell's wish [illegible] lost."

As David spoke the last word his wandering gaze chanced to fall upon Jameson. He and the lawyer shook hands in a gloomy way.

"Mr. Jameson," said the agent, "I don't know what brings you here, but you come to a place of sorrow."

"I am traveling," replied the lawyer gravely. "More I will tell later. Just now I can [illegible] say that I am depressed because the treasure is lost."

[illegible] touched his arm. He turned and saw Helen and Lazare. In the excitement all but the girl had forgotten the voyageur. She had gone to [illegible] had been speaking earnestly. [illegible] now she had brought him to her other friends.

"The treasure is not lost," she said quietly. Jason never had possession of it. He seems to have dug, but in vain. Ask this faithful ally."

"If it is the inland piece that is wanted," added Lazare, "it shall soon be yours. When I left mademoiselle I was long away, but for this I am not to blame. I went to Spur Island to hunt for Captain Severn. He was gone, but a party of Chippewas was there, searching for him. By accident I got penned up in a hole among the rocks by them, and I had to stay there. I heard them tell that Peter Korway had sent them to kill Severn, and they would have served me the same way if they had found me. I had to stay. When they left I hurried away, too, and got back to the mainland. Now, I was worried about the inland piece, so I went secretly to where I buried it, dug it up, smoothed over the place again, and then bore the inland piece away. I buried it elsewhere, and can soon take you there."

There was a great clearing of faces around the speaker. Gloom was succeeded by profound relief.

"Lazare has been our true friend!" cried Helen, here eyes gleaming. "He is good and noble!"

"No, no!" hastily exclaimed the voyageur. "But, mademoiselle, you saved my life at Fort Frances, and I do not forget. Not I. I am no Chippewa but Iroquois, all Iroquois. Now that nobody jeers at me I am free to tell my blood. I am Iroquois!"

"The blood is good and so is the man!" said Roger taking Lazare's hand. "Voyageur, I hail you as a model comrade."

David pressed forward, his face aglow, and loudly asking permission to take Lazare's hand next, but that man shrank back confused.

[illegible]

It was good advice, and, with [illegible] the front, equipped with a spade, [illegible] made the short journey. In a thicket where there was no visible sign of previous attention he began to dig, while all others stood around in anxious waiting. In a short time the side of an inland piece was uncovered. A little longer and it was fully revealed.

[illegible] and his associates quickly discovered [illegible] private mark that proved it to be [illegible] sure package.

[illegible] more the voyageur was thanked, with warmth. He bore this for a time, much like one under depression of [illegible] and then broke out in quick speech [illegible] no, it was nothing. I was hired to [illegible] it I could. Say no more, no more!"

[illegible] this he fell to petting Barbe as if [illegible] had no other thought, and he was left [illegible] peace. His modesty was equal to his [illegible]

"[illegible]," said Jameson, with animation. "I [illegible] an explanation to make. David [illegible] I have followed your brigade all the way from Toronto, seeking by mad haste to find you at the earliest possible moment. You shall know why. Not long had you [illegible] gone from Toronto when Seth Bardell was seized with apoplexy. Directly after [illegible] the man who had been his servant for [illegible] came to me with a strange [illegible]ion. It was that which led me to [illegible]

"What confe[illegible]"

"Particulars [illegible] later, but for now, let me say [illegible] and the proof [illegible] that Asa Bardell did not die [illegible] Twenty-three years ago Asa was in the wilderness with his wife and his son of about two years. Storm and deluge followed. It was supposed that the son perished. Yet, he lived, was saved by others who had no clue to his identity, and was by them reared to manhood. Seth Bardell knew this, and so did his servant, though [illegible] did not suspect that another shared [illegible] secret. Seth told Jason before the latter left Toronto; the servant heard him. Now, the treasure that we have here [illegible] willed by Asa to Helen, but the other Bardell money—what Asa had by inheritance —belongs to Asa's son."

"But," asked David, "where is that son?"

Jameson turned to Roger. The parti[illegible] was not wholly calm, and his face was a panorama of mixed emotions, among which doubt and bewilderment were particularly noticeable. He seemed to be struggling with deep emotions.

"Asa's son," quietly replied the lawyer, "is here!"

And he laid his hand on Severn's shoulder.

When calmness had been restored it was seen that there was need of planning for the future. It was clear that Roger must go on with his brigade, and equally certain that Helen and the treasure ought not to make the long and hazardous journey. But how was the latter to be safely returned to Toronto? It must have a guard of fidelity and strength of numbers. Where was this guard to be found?

Severn suddenly recalled that, according to report, the Governor of Rupert's-land was soon to leave Fort Alexander for Montreal. As he traveled with numerous men, this would give the desired security, and the plan was open to no objection. Accordingly, all went on to meet the Governor.

[illegible] had Lazare, Proue, Pera and Chardonnais of his old crew yet with him. He prevailed upon Torbex to add his presence for a time, but when Fort Alexander was reached he succeeded in engaging regular voyageurs for the empty seats.

At the fort, too, he parted with Helen, David and Jameson, and saw them and the [illegible]-bound with the Go[illegible]

[illegible] Barbe and his faithful men [illegible] turned his [illegible] face toward the farther [illegible]ds. The Express boats were ultimately overtaken, the journey to Oregon made, business transacted and all affairs completed to his satisfaction. Then the homeward journey was made, and he once more reached Toronto.

He had always known that he was a child of a storm in the wilderness, but had made no public mention of it. That he was Asa Bardell's son had never occurred to him. As Seth had died soon after his seizure, Roger was his legal heir, but Seth's money was never accepted.

Asa's money was not long divided, for Roger and Helen saw fit to unite their lives in marriage, after which their joint treasure was in no more danger. Jameson cared for business matters with his usual fidelity for Severn was not ready to leave his free life.

Going no more to Oregon, he made shorter journeys in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and where he sat as partisan, Lazare, Proue, Chardonnais and Pera pulled at the oars. These faithful voyageurs were often welcomed as guests at the partisan's home, but Lazare was an especially valued guest. He lost his taciturnity in a large degree, and, sitting with Roger, Helen and David, with Barbe lying among them, he sometimes delighted in talking of the old dark days when so much trouble fell upon them through the machinations of the hawk of the fur-land.

It was known that Carrel, Deroux and John Dongan were in Rupert's-land, but they never crossed the path of their one-time associates. It was ultimately known, too, that it was Dongan who wrote the forged messages which led to the separation of Roger's and Alexis' boats. He did this on the spur of the moment, thinking that, by separating them, he might possibly help his master.

Better for that master if he had never acted. Seeing the chance open to him, Jason had acted prematurely, and had failed. And while his enemies enjoyed the treasure for which he had plotted in vain, Jason slept in his grave on the island in the [illegible]

(The end.)

Cornered Opie Read.

Ople Read is a good story teller. Everybody knows it and this proves it:

How [illegible] ts, at the close of an evening, have had some fond parent tell them of lit[illegible]ed 8, or little Willie, [illegible] who could recite, [illegible] course to course [illegible] of over-zealous parents and [illegible] Read has met his share.

At the close of one of Read's evenings a proud father and mother introduced themselves to the novelist, and asked if he could not hear their little prodigy Mary recite in the morning.

Of course Mr. [illegible] to hear the future [illegible] that he had to catch the [illegible] train.

The father—But the train doesn't go till 11 [illegible]

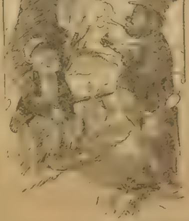
Mr. Read—[illegible] I know, but I'm compelled to t[illegible] freight [illegible]t is a fast freight, and [illegible]

Mr. Read—Well, it will stop for me. You see, I have to catch it to get to my next date. The superintendent is an old friend of mine. I wrote him and received a reply today that he had wired the agent that the train would stop, and to allow me to get aboard.

The father—I don't see how that can be, I'm the agent, and nobody has wired m[illegible]

Mr. Read—To tell you the truth, I'm a liar. Bring the little girl around to the hotel at 9.30.

Three-Quarters Smoked.



Bill Blow—I never smoke anyt'ing less dan quarter cigars.

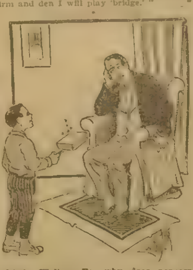
Sol Slow—No, dey ain't hardly wort' pickin' up unless d[illegible]s dat much left.

Higher Game.

The fiery old broker came in unexpectedly and found the office boy playing craps.

"Young man," he thundered, "do you expect to play craps as long as you remain in this office"

"Oh, no, boss," replied the bright boy; "I hope some day to be raised to partner in de firm and den I will play 'bridge.' "



Little Wallace—Pa, why does popcorn pop?

His Pa—Because, my son, like men, it doesn't know any better.

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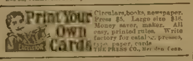
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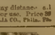
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BOYS' AND GIRLS' CORNER

THE BALLOON BOYS;

Or, THE WIZARDS OF THE AIR.

By COL. LAWRENCE LESLIE.

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Begun in No. 23, June 8. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RIVALS OF THE CLOUDS.

It was an exhilarating moment.

Swiftly the gas monster, freed from all connection with mother earth, sprang aloft. The last sound they heard below was the amazed shout of the officer as he saw the balloon carry off those whom he had felt so confident of arresting.

Below them the town was still sleeping, though the gray of dawn had begun to spread around, cornering the imps of darkness and chasing them like wolves into their lairs.

Lights shone here and there, for it was a bustling town, where manufacturing was carried on to a considerable extent.

The spectacle was a wonderful one.

Objects could just be distinguished as they ascended into space.

There were the glowing eyes of the mills that kept working night and day.

There the white mist hugging the lower strata tells where the river wound its way along.

An express train was rumbling over the prairie, its electric headlight looking weird and uncanny in the uncertain stage of early dawn.

As they ascended, the light around them grew stronger.

Beyond the constantly widening horizon they could note the approach of the day king, as his upper rim is visible from a mountain top long before those in the valley can see it.

They were now half a mile above the surface of the earth.

The town no longer lay below.

Although it was calm when they started, they had not mounted far into the realms of space before a breeze was met that wafted them in a northerly direction.

The town was being left behind.

Both boys leaned eagerly over the edge of the basket and looked.

They had more than an ordinary interest in this scrutiny.

As for Petite Barbara, she had shrunk back, appalled when they shot upwards, and crouched in the bottom of the basket, hiding her eyes with her hands.

It was a new, a novel and terrifying sensation for the child—the motion of the balloon in midair can be compared to nothing else under Heaven, for even the pitching or tossing of a ship on the mighty deep gives one no conception of the peculiar sensation of being hung up in space.

"Look!" cried Pete suddenly.

He had grasped his companion's arm and was pointing backward in the quarter where lay the little town, pointing eagerly as though he had made a discovery of great importance.

What he saw became visible to Bob at about the same instant.

The other b[illegible]

Then the pu[illegible] it had begun.

Bob felt a sp[illegible] of reproach because he had taken Petite Barbara into this field of danger. Still, nothing else could have been done under the circumstances, and whatever happened there was satisfaction in knowing this.

"Pete, get your gun," he said sternly.

If there was to be any lead throwing in those dizzy heights he meant that they should do their share of it.

Nor was his companion slow to obey, for he realized the gravity of the occasion.

Taking the Marlin repeating rifle he stood in plain [illegible] waiting developments.

This left Bob free to manage the balloon.

When the other airship had mounted to a height equal to that which they traversed, those in control prevented its rising further.

It was in their rear, though the breeze as yet was so light that they had not drifted beyond gunshot.

"Be ready, Pete. If you see or hear them fire, blaze away. It rests with them whether there is to be a tragedy in midair."

"They're looking at us with a glass."

Bob snatched up a field glass.

"Yes," he declared, "and one of them has a gun in his hands."

"The fiends."

"Level your rifle, Pete, but hold your fire until I give the word."

Pete did so.

The effect was marvelous as Bob discovered by means of his glass.

It was Signor Carasini who handled the gun, and he made great haste to put it away.

Evidently, much as he longed to destroy the Sky Wanderer, when it came about that the boot was on the other leg, and their craft in danger of being demolished, the case was quite different.

The sun peeped up and bathed both balloons in its mellow light.

With its rising came the wind, increasing in force.

It was grand.

They could see a great panorama spread out below, in which towns and cities were dotted, rivers looked like threads of silver, and the whole country was a flat map.

A few drifting clouds sometimes enveloped them, but as yet the region above was fairly clear.

The professor was a man of long experience, and it might easily be determined that he knew all the small wrinkles calculated to assist the speed of such a vessel.

Besides, in making his new balloon he doubtless took advantage of the opportunity to improve on the old model.

Hence the pursuing balloon gained, and if it was to be a race there was evidence in this that the Sky Wanderer was not in it, unless Bob could find some means of increasing his speed, which was hardly likely.

He threw out some ballast.

They mounted high above the clouds and were spinning along at a giddy speed.

At any rate the Italian would be given a run for his money.

Not being to the manner born, the signor would feel that peculiar sense of alarm that comes over every novice in ballooning when for the first time he sails the azure heights.

The professor was after them and at the increased height they went sailing on.

Even the thought of falling was enough to freeze the blood in a man's veins, for they were possibly some two miles above the earth's surface.

Heaven help the wretch who once started to make that descent.

They would find a pancake instead of a man.

It was Bob's policy to keep Barbara hidden for the present.

Possibly their enemies did not even suspect her presence in midair.

Hence he bade her to crawl under one of the blankets, which the child was not loth to do, as the air had become very keen, and both boys were forced to button up their coats.

As the other balloon continued to gain upon them, in half an hour it was within speaking distance.

It is almost incredible, the speed with which these airships can travel before a good breeze.

They do not have to resist the principle of friction so detrimental to the swift passage of a railroad train, and even the resistance offered by water to the onward progress of steamships or sailing vessels does not arise to hold them.

So the spot marked upon the map of the earth as the scene of their ascent was long since wiped out of sight, and they were speeding along in a noiseless, fascinating manner that has to be experienced in order to be understood.

At length the two air monsters were not separated by more than a hundred feet.

Pete still stood there holding his rifle.

"Do they mean to board us?" he demanded.

"Hardly," laughed Bob, [illegible]or such [illegible]hing would be impossible. With su[illegible]use globes above, the baskets could never come together. And if they did, [illegible] soon as [illegible] men jumped, their balloon would shoot up[illegible]

"And ours drop like [illegible]

"Yes."

"But what can they want?"

"Probably to talk. It would be a novelty to carry on a conversation two miles in the air."

"Watch him."

The Italian had put his hands to his [illegible]h, forming a rude trumpet.

"[illegible]" he shouted.

"W[illegible]at dy'e [illegible] Bob.

[illegible]

"[illegible] know we've got the girl," said Pete quickly.

"Surrender—what?" demanded his comrade.

"You have my child," came the response.

"We refuse to give her up."

"It is enough. You will all perish miserably together."

CHAPTER VIII.

PARACHUTE PETE TAKES A TUMBLE.

These vindictive words only served to render the young aeronauts more determined.

They knew their ground.

This man had no grain of affection for Barbara, whom he called his child, and they did not believe that ties of relationship bound them, else he could not so coolly threaten her death.

"We laugh at your threats. If you try to destroy us we have you at our mercy. Perhaps you may not mind a fall of two miles. At any rate you'd never know what hurt you."

Bob was quite at his ease, a circumstance the others could not fail to note.

The Italian raved.

"Keep off," said Pete, bringing his rifle to bear upon the two men, for the pursuing craft was drawing up too close on them.

The professor dropped to a little lower level and the two balloons kept on in company for a long time.

It must have been an astonishing spectacle for any one below whose keen vision discovered these two airships traveling the mysterious regions above the clouds.

These latter had increased in number and there were indications of a storm.

Bob had dropped down when the other balloon did, for the latter was now in advance.

He hoped the professor might be unable to check the progress of his craft, and thus leave them further in the lurch.

This, however, did not happen.

Baxter knew how to put out a wind drag and thus delay his onward sweep.

It was impossible to be rid of him.

Thus noon came.

It found them rushing onward.

The wind had carried them far to the north, and through breaches in the clouds below they had glimpses of a great body of water.

Could it be possible they had already drifted over the great lakes at the junction of Michigan and Huron?

A fall now would be just as fatal as on the land—indeed, the unfortunate would doubtless be dead before he reached the water.

They were now treated to a sight that was rather novel, though common enough with old and experienced sky travelers.

A thunder storm was sweeping over the lakes.

Below them were black masses of clouds.

The lightning leaped from one to another and the peals of thunder were deafening, as though a battle royal was taking place.

Both of the boys were entranced with the view, and even Barbara, recovering from her first fright, was induced to bend over the side of the basket to look upon the weird spectacle.

How it happened no one was ever able to say.

Bob turned his attention to another quarter, and suddenly his ears were saluted by a shriek from Barbara.

He turned to find that Parachute Pete was no longer in the basket of the balloon.

Leaning over, some sudden whirl must have sent him out.

It was with a feeling of horror that Bob bent over the rim of the basket.

He fully expected to see his unfortunate companion dropping like a plummet into the storm clouds far below, through which he would shoot like a meteor to meet his fate in the lake.

Not so.

Heaven was indeed kind to poor Pete.

Even as he fell to what seemed certain death, he naturally threw out both hands.

A couple of ropes trailed below.

They were useful to stay the progress of the balloon, for as they skimmed along the earth, men racing after could catch hold of these ropes.

His hand clasped one and closed upon it with the grim clutch of despair.

As Bob's horror-stricken face appeared over the edge of the basket, there was his friend [illegible] ing ten feet or more below.

Pete's face was white, but he seemed to retain some of his nerve, and in a rather choked voice cried out:

"Still on deck, old fellow."

"Can you climb up?" demanded Bob.

"Yes, but can't get over the edge."

"Can you hold on?"

"If the rope don't break, sure."

Hand over hand he climbed up a bit, until he could get his leg fast in the ro[illegible]

"I have a plan. There is the cabl[illegible] I'll make a noose in the end and drop d[illegible] to you."

"That's a good fellow, Bob.'

Evidently Pete did not enjoy his situation as a tail to the big kite.

He was a little nervous about the rope, for a sudden strain might snap it, and—well, there was consolation in the fact that no pain would accompany his taking off.

Bob was soon ready.

He paid the rope out over the side.

The loop came within Pete's grasp and he laid hold of it.

To transfer his allegiance to the new line was but the work of a second.

Then he felt safer.

"Hold fast above," he shouted, beginning to climb.

To an athlete this was not a stupendous task, especially since he now had surety.

Reaching the basket he was clutched by Bob's outstretched hand and assisted in.

Some one applauded.

It was the professor.

He had seen some d[illegible] during a lifetime dev[illegible] regions of the clouds, [illegible] nev[illegible] for thrilling features exc[illegible] getting for the [illegible] at [illegible] were enemies [illegible] tion to give its [illegible]

Poor Pete was quite exh[illegible] gained the interior of [illegible] basket

In spite of the chilly state of the atmosphere, great beads of perspiration stood out upon his forehead, and he breathed heavily.

Nevertheless, his first act was to pick up the gun he had dropped when taking his headlong plunge, and resume his watch over the rival balloon.

It had been a terrible experience, and one Pete was not apt to forget in a hurry.

The storm still thundered and flashed below as it appeared to be driving in something of the same direction as themselves.

"What are they doing?" asked Pete suddenly.

"Throwing out ballast," returned Bob.

"They mount higher."

"Shall we follow suit?"

"I don't see the necessity. Only for the storm I'd rather drop lower."

As yet neither of them suspected the intentions of their enemies, who sought to destroy them, but there was a deep motive in this new action, which would soon be discovered.

The rival balloon arose until it soared far up in the realms above.

Pete laid his gun aside as it was useless now.

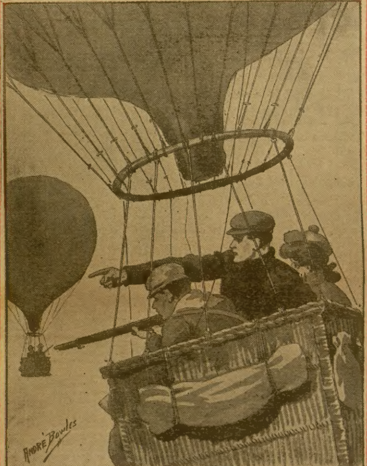
Did the others mean to give up the fight?

They moved faster and were gradually reaching a point directly overhead.

"Good Heavens! see there, they are dropping balls of fire down on us!" exclaimed Pete.

What he said was the truth—the scoundrels in the other balloon were firing balls of cotton soaked in oil and attached to weights.

One of these strange messengers sped by close to them—others were following fast.



"Level your rifle, but h[illegible] your fir[illegible]"

Should one alight on the balloon there would be a quick explosion, and then—annihilation!

It was a fearful moment.

Would Bob be equal to the occasion?

CHAPTER IX.
STORM-TOSSED.

Nothing could be gained by delay.

The other balloon was so far above them that it was next to impossible for them to see it and utterly out of the question to dream of hitting it with the rifle.

Hence, their enemies, having outgeneraled them in a choice of position, were now in a way to do them incalculable damage.

True, they could also ascend.

All that was necessary was to throw out some of the sandbags constituting the ballast.

What would that avail?

As they arose the danger must increase, since they were almost directly under the others.

If the fire balls failed in their mission, perhaps a sandbag judiciously dropped might cause a fracture in the silken globe and bring about the sudden end.

Besides, there was the gun that could certainly be brought to bear upon the balloon.

[illegible] to ascend looked like inviting death. [illegible] about letting a little gas escape and [illegible] down?

[illegible]pect was not very inviting.

[illegible]uld not [illegible]tch a glimpse of the [illegible] the lake because of the whirling [illegible] still continued to mass below. [illegible]ng elements kept up their furi[illegible], and the [illegible] was anything [illegible]ble.

[illegible]thing had to be done, since they [illegible]ay where they were.

Another fire ball came down and alighted on the balloon.

The young aeronauts held their breath, fearful lest the end had come. There would be no time given to prepare with parachutes or anything else—besides, with a raging storm underneath and the mighty lake below that, of what avail would such weak measures be?

The fire ball failed to remain upon the top of the balloon, but drifted by, sputtering wickedly.

It was a narrow escape.

Bob hesitated no longer, realizing the value of time in an emergency like this.

He opened the valve and allowed some of the gas to escape.

Immediately they began to fall rapidly, and approach the storm clouds.

A new experience was about to be their portion, for while they escaped the dreadful danger threatening them from human agency above, it was to encounter other perils in one way just as terrible.

Suddenly the sunlight was shut out—they had entered among the clouds.

Bob was ready for this moment.

Over went a sandbag, and their progress was stayed—another, and they no longer descended, but were rushed along with the eddies of wind that swept the fog-like banks like the waters in a furious rapids, whirling, rushing and struggling in maddening fury.

It was a sensation to awe one, while at the same time it aroused the liveliest anticipations. Under ordinary conditions when danger threatens a determined man may generally help himself, and very often turn the scale in his favor.

In this instance they were practically helpless.

Where the win[illegible] chose to send them they must go, wi[illegible] t[illegible] privilege of descending or mounting higher at any time.

Bob had been an eager student of all that pertained to his favorite hobby.

He had read the [illegible]count of every famous voyage made in the region of the clouds, and could derive some benefit from the knowledge thus obtained.

If his experience was small, he made up for that in his daring nature and his reading.

At first they were simply whirled along with race-horse speed.

Such a momentum, although its gyrations made them dizzy, was not without its redeeming features, since they were fast outstripping the other balloon in the race.

It was not long, however, before the currents began to conflict with each other.

Then the conduct of the balloon gave its director not a little uneasiness.

It twisted and waltzed around in the most erratic manner, performing all manner of queer freaks, and so violent were the jerks that accompanied these gyrations that the boys were compelled to maintain a pretty stiff hold upon the basket in order to avoid being thrown out.

Poor Petite Barbara suffered the most, because she was a girl, and quite unaccustomed to such strange adventures.

She hid herself under one of the blankets, a shuddering heap, and prayed.

Around them were all manner of weird noises, such as come to the ears of storm-tossed mariners. The wind caused whistling and singing among the stays of the air craft, and at times these sounds were so loud as to appear like the shrill notes of a fife corps.

Pete looked up at his companion.

It was almost dark around them at times, but the vivid flashes of lightning when the electric fluid darted from cloud to cloud, lit up the scene with a ghastly glare.

Thus Bob's face looked unnaturally white to his companion when he saw it.

There was a firm expression about it, too, a clinching of the teeth that told of a stubborn will fully aroused.

He would only give in when compelled to.

"What dy'e think of it?" gasped Pete, anxious to know the worst, for his nerves were all on edge, so to speak.

"It's a cyclone of the clouds," came the reply.

"And growing worse all the time?"

"I fear so."

"Then we're goners."

"That doesn't follow. At the last when I make a motion with my arm——"

"Yes."

"Heave over a couple of sandbags and we'll climb out of this again."

"Phew!" as the lightning flashed around them, and the thunder crashed with a power that human agency would find it hard to equal, "I hope it will be soon, then."

"Not getting frightened, Pete, I hope?"

"Oh, no, but just a little anxious, you know."

They said no more, for with such a clatter and din around them, it was very difficult to converse.

Pete was encouraged by the determined air of his companion.

In such a time of turmoil, a brave presence carries with it great weight.

There could be no mistaking the fact that their situation was growing worse instead of better.

The indications seemed to point to the fact that they were being hurried forward to what might be the core or center of the disturbance, and in a celestial storm, this is the position that entails the most danger.

It was worse than being in a storm at sea.

There, a staunch ship stood between the wind-tossed mariners and death.

Even should the worst overtake them and a wreck occur, they still had a chance for saving their lives.

Life boats, patent rafts, wreckage, all these things offered at least an opportunity.

How different with voyagers in a balloon.

The snapping of even one rope might cause the great airship to careen, and once a wreck occurred nothing could save the travelers.

Bob knew it, too.

He was only keeping along in the clouds as long as he dared, hoping to distance the other balloon and avoid being bombarded again.

There were almost continual noises in the air, but when by accident now and then these ceased, they could hear poor Barbara praying or sobbing.

The darkness increased, so that between the flashes of lightning it was as though night had descended upon them.

As it was only between two and three in the afternoon, this was all the more terrifying.

There was always great danger lest some stray bolt of electricity, in its gambols from one cloud to another, might take an erratic course and cause an explosion of the gas in the silk bag.

Of course the combustion would hardly cause a murmur in comparison with the tremendous rattle of Heaven's artillery, but it would be the crack of doom to the three venturesome wanderers who braved the perils of the upper currents of air.

When the wind gave them such a shake that the basket seemed on the verge of being wholly overturned, and the balloon began to turn around with the twisting motion that marks the funnel of a tornado on the prairies, Bob Runyon knew the time had come to make a change.

It was now or never.

He might again encounter new dangers above, but it was folly to re[illegible] longer here.

Turning to Pete he found that worthy watching him with the eyes of a hawk.

All that was needed was a gesture.

Pete had prepared himself.

Over went a sandbag.

The balloon instantly felt the effect—there was an additional buoyancy in the way the great airship cleft the atmosphere, a spring to their progress, which had been utterly lacking while they were battered about at the mercy of the conflicting winds.

Again Bob moved his arm.

Pete had stooped and had another sandbag in his arms, which he heaved over as though he were an automatom.

Again their upward movement received a new impetus.

At this rate they must soon rush out of the swirling storm clouds into the clear atmosphere that lay above.

Both boys were dizzy on account of the circular, whirling movement which the balloon had taken.

It is one of the most disagreeable experiences of such a venture and which remains as a nightmare long after the physical discomforts arising from the sensation have vanished.

Even a third sandbag was sent flying into space, and then Bob signaled "enough."

Already was the darkness lessening as they mounted nearer the upper strata of clouds and the sunshine found a chance to penetrate.

It was a cheering sign.

Even Petite Barbara, conscious that a change was taking place, came out from under the shelter of the blanket, and creeping to the edge of the basket, peered over at the sight with awe written upon every feature of her face.

Thus they finally shot out from among the last straggling hosts of vapors—the storm raged and roared below—above were the blue heavens, with the great golden orb half-way down toward the western horizon.

It was like a sudden translation from darkness to light, from death to life!

This extremely interesting story of youthful adventures in ballooning will be continued in next week's Ledger. This story is filled with excitement and dangerous situations, and if you do not read it to the end you will miss a great deal that is splendidly entertaining. Would you like our fine King Cameras without cost, or six of our fine spring patterns entirely free? Then subscribe for the Ledger and they will be sent to you. Read our premium announcement on pages thirteen and fifteen.

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Two Faces Under One Hat.

(Continued from page seven.)

panied by Kate drove from the sheriff's door.

Now be it remembered that Marsh was one of the sheriff's bondsmen, and to him he had made known his desire to make Kate his wife. The sheriff, of course, had told his wife, and if ever a human being was extolled, and all the good qualities and imaginary good qualities that he possessed, or might have possessed, heralded to mortal ears, that man was Caleb Marsh on this occasion of Kate's visit, and by these two would-be matchmakers, who in their hearts despised Marsh, as did nearly every one else in the county.

But he was Sheriff Root's bondsman, and even if the sheriff did have to pay his State and county taxes, it was a service, and being such, he thought it no more than his duty to help him along in this matter of securing a young and handsome wife. "If she don't have a good time at first," he said to his wife, "she will later, for she should outlive Caleb by thirty years, and she will have a fortune when he dies."

"Yes," said Mrs. Root, "and her father will save his farm."

"Humph!" exclaimed the sheriff, "don't you see, Marsh is bound to get the farm anyway?"

"All things considered," thought Caleb, as the horse was speeding along, "this should be a good time to broach the subject. Root and his wife have probably been praising me up. Well, here goes!"

"Mr. Marsh," here broke in the voice of his companion, "you must take this envelope back. I really could not think of accepting it. Why should you——"

"Because I love you, Miss Kate! You know I love you with all my heart, and that is not a little—no, no, it is not a little! There is nothing I would not do to make you happy."

Kate's face at first turned scarlet, then became as white as though she was suddenly taken ill, and she trembled with agitation.

"I have loved you for a long time," continued Caleb, "and I have tried to prove it to you. I have been good to you and your father, have I not?"

"Yes, yes, sir, very good. No one would have taken your place."

"Well, Kate, I want you for my wife. As long as there was a possibility of your marrying Mark, I tried to give up with a good grace. I hoped he would prove innocent, for your sake; but he didn't, and you will never see him again. If you should, you could not become his wife. Everything will show you that you should become my wife.

"Your father would be happy in our marriage, for his mortgages, as your husband I would release. I would be the happiest man alive. Sarah would worship you as though you were a queen, and if the love and money of Caleb Marsh could make you happy you should never know an unhappy hour. I have waited a long time, Kate, to give you time to think and to know me better. Now I must know. Will you become my wife?"

"I feared this, Mr. Marsh. I feared it, and cannot claim that I am surprised."

"Feared it, Miss Kate?" said Caleb, with a troubled look.

"I feel very grateful to you, Mr. Marsh, for all you have done for us," said Kate, with tears in her eyes, "and I should. But for your kindness we would have lost our home; but gratitude, I think, is not love. I do not love you as a wife should love her husband."

"Bless you, Miss Kate, it is hardly to be supposed you would now, but you will, once you are my wife. I shall be so good to you, you can't help it. Your slightest wish shall be gratified. Your father's wants shall all be attended to, and our home shall be his home as long as he lives, or at least until Arthur comes home and marries."

"You think he will come home, Mr. Marsh?"

"Certainly I do! He is a young man of pluck and energy. He is off making a fortune somewhere; perhaps in the mines."

"In the mines?"

Caleb moved uneasily in his seat, as he replied: "Why, yes, in the mines. Thousands of young men have made fortunes there; why not Arthur?"

"God grant it!" was the response.

"Let him come home, dear Kate, and find you my wife; find your father happy, and find himself master of Elwood. Oh, tell me you will, and let our marriage soon take place! You shall have the finest bridal outfit that was ever seen in Lundy County! Only say 'yes,' and a diamond ring shall encircle one of your fingers before tomorrow night."

"How—how soon, Mr. Marsh?"

"I am ready now, Kate—today—tomorrow—next week! Any time; only let it be soon."

He felt her start suddenly in her seat.

"Of course," he added, "it will take time for you to get ready. Yes, and for me. When I stand beside you at the altar I don't intend that you shall be ashamed of me."

"Oh, I should not be, Mr. Marsh!"

"See that," he exclaimed, "you half love me now."

"Oh, no! Only I meant——"

"Well, you can set the day, Kate, if you will only say 'yes,' but it must be before the 15th of September."

A cold chill passed through Kate's frame—the 15th of September was the date the mortgages held by Caleb fell due.

"Before the 15th of September?" she said absently.

"Why, yes—you see, that is over four months off, and I would like to release the mortgages and hand them to your father before that day. Oh, he shall be a happy man on our wedding day!"

"I must save Elwood to my dear old father," thought Kate. "I must. And perhaps I shall not be so very unhappy. I will become reconciled to my fate, at least. There is no way to defer my fate beyond that date. The fates have decided that I become the wife of Caleb Marsh."

"Well, Kate dear, you are thinking?"

"I have been deciding, Mr. Marsh. If your mortgages are not paid before the 15th of September, I will become your wife on that day."

"Why, Kate, sweet girl, then you are mine! Mine!" cried Caleb, as exultingly as if no conditions had been attached to her acceptance of his proposal. And he grasped her hand and pressed it to his lips before she could withdraw it.

"You forget, Mr. Marsh! Arthur may return and pay off your mortgages before the time expires."

"Ah, true!" he said, with a peculiar smile, "and then I lose you."

"Unless I change my mind. I don't think I love you well enough to become your wife."

"Well enough? Then you do love me some?"

"I have not said so."

"Well, I must be content. If I knew where Arthur was, I would write him not to come until after that date; though I would he could be present at our wedding. But miners seldom leave their work until cold weather runs them out. You are my promised bride, Kate, and knowing that I shall make you happy, I am content."

"Conditionally—your promised bride," said Kate, as she glanced up. "Oh!" she exclaimed, and a sudden tremor seized her frame.

They were passing the spot where the murder had been committed.

"I often feel like that, Miss Kate," Caleb said, "when driving by the spot where that dastardly deed was committed. Go on, Prince!" and the speed of the horse was accelerated.

"Strange," said Kate presently, "that I should have promised, even conditionally, to become your bride, there, where that horrible murder was committed."

"We neither of us noticed that we were approaching it, Kate. Imagine your words unspoken, and now that we have left it behind, will you become my wife on the 15th of September?"

"Conditionally," said Kate, and she reiterated the conditions.

"I shall procure that ring tomorrow," he said. "A sparkling diamond will look well on your hand."

Caleb thought of claiming a kiss; but he knew he should only cause his companion to withdraw further from his side.

"I hardly think, being engaged only conditionally, I should wear the ring," said Kate.

"I shall procure it, and I trust, Kate, to please me you will wear it. It will not prove burdensome, and I would almost wear shackles for your sake. Virtually, you know, your conditions amount to nothing. Tell me, Kate, that you do not hate your future husband."

"Your future husband." The words grated on Kate's ears:

"If I hated you, Mr. Marsh, I should not have given you my promise, even conditionally. I think more of you than I once supposed I ever could."

"Sweet girl, you shall never think less of me," he said. "I will risk that you will wear the ring for my sake, and when the time draws near I shall supply you with funds with which to provide your bridal outfit."

"My tastes are not extravagant," said Kate, and when the time comes, I can procure what I shall require."

"No, no! You are to be my wife, and to help spend my money. The handsomest girl in the county shall be the best dressed bride. No gossiping tongues shall say that Caleb Marsh loves his money better than he does the girl he leads to the altar."

"If I am your wife, I shall try to please you."

"Bless you, you have only to please yourself to do that. If I can make you happy, it is all I ask."

"Who would have believed that Caleb Marsh had so much sentiment in his nature?" thought Kate, as she said: "You are very kind."

"Kind, sweet girl? I lo[illegible] you," was the reply. "You are my betro[illegible]ed bri[illegible] Try to forget that you ever named co[illegible]tions, for they will prove no bar to our marriage. The 15th of September we sh[illegible]l be husb[illegible] and wife."

"Husband and wife!" echoed Kate, as the horse drew up at Elwoo[illegible]

This thrilling and remark[illegible]le story will be continued in next week's Ledger, giving the reader chapters filled with dramatic situations of the very [illegible]ghest interest. To every one subscribing [illegible]or the Ledger we are now sending, entirely without cost, one of our splendid King Cameras, also any six of our selected and valuable patterns, as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen. Look at our advertisement of these splendid premiums and see if you do not wish them.

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Tillman Talking.

Senator Tillman was recently talking in his usual vehement manner. The conversation threatened to be stormy. A friend expostulated.

"Please don't talk so much," said the warning voice.

It irritated Tillman.

"Talk!" he shouted. "I'll talk just as much, whenever and wherever I please. I would like to see the man who can keep me from talking!"

"I can!" came a voice from the crowd.

Tillman turned and glared. Then his eye caught the speaker. He pretended to quail. The laugh went around and the critical situation was saved.

The man who had hurled the defiant "I can!" was Dr. T. T. Moore, Tillman's lifetime dentist.

Science Notes.

English factory girls are not in all cases ready to accept scientific improvements in their working quarters. They actually have been known to show an aversion to well-ventilated rooms, preferring their old, stuffy quarters. Professor Kenwood of University College, London, recently lectured to a number of such young women. Taking up a test-tube, the professor said: "The contents of this tube I hold show you the color of arterial blood before it has circulated through the body and gathered up its impurities." There was a suppressed murmur of astonishment as the girls gazed at the tube with its bright, blood-red contents. "Now in this tube," said the lecturer ominously, as he held up another vessel, "you see what represents the condition of the blood after it has passed through the body." A prolonged and horror-stricken "O-oh!" greeted this exhibit. The tube seemed to be full of dirty red ink, and the professor took advantage of the impression he had made to lay down the principle: "No fresh air, no bright-red blood." Next he drove the lesson deeper in by reminding the girls that Grace Darling had died of consumption at the age of 27, all because she slept in a chamber little bigger than herself. The glorious fresh air of the Farne islands availed her nothing, although she breathed it all day. She slept in a badly ventilated room.

How large is an atom? Lord Kelvin says: "If we raise a drop of water to the size of the earth and raise the atom in the same proportion, then it will be some place between the size of a marble and a cricket ball." John A. Brashear in an address delivered at Lehigh University not long ago added: "If you fill a tiny vessel one centimeter cube (smaller than a thimble) with hydrogen corpuscles, you can place therein, in round numbers, five hundred and twenty-five octillions (525,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000) of them. If these corpuscles are allowed to run out of the vessel at the rate of 1,000 per second it will require seventeen quintillions (17,000,000,000,000,000,000) of years to empty it."

How long can an animal live without eating. Last years a dog was imprisoned for twenty-nine days in a rabbit warren at Guildford, England, yet was dug out alive. During the siege of Metz, in the Franco-Prussian war, a dog was confined without food or water for thirty-nine days; while Dover records have the story of a pig which, buried alive by a fall of cliff, came out all right at the end of 160 days.

A Warning to the Public.

"What is the charge against this man?" asked the judge as a man whose appearance showed he was one of the common people faced him.

"He is charged with disorderly and unbecoming pedestrianism," replied the policeman who had made the arrest.

"Who is the complainant?" the judge asked.

A meek and humble millionaire, who had made a fortune in the bread and milk trust, stepped forward.

"I am, your honor," he said.

"Go ahead and tell in your own way what the prisoner did," the judge directed.

"Yesterday afternoon, your honor, while my four chaffeurs were acting as pallbearers for a fellow chaffeur, who was killed in a race in one of the downtown streets my little son, Algernon, wished to take a spin on the boulevard. I lifted him into my 200-horse power car——"

"How old is little Algernon?" the judge asked.

"Algernon is not quite 3 years old, your honor, and as quiet and peaceable a little fellow as ever gladdened a household. As I said, I lifted Algernon into the car, and he left my garage in high spirits. But within half an hour he returned in tears.

"At first he refused to tell what was the trouble, but after persistent questioning I learned a man had crossed the street in front of him, compelling him not only to check his machine, but to deviate from the course he had selected. The little fellow said he would not have cared so much if he had not been making a speed test. The action of this person caused Algernon to lose at least a second and a half.

"I do not wish to see this man severely punished, Judge; but surely something should be done to teach pedestrians their place and I am much wroth that my son should be a victim of this person's deliberate disregard of the law. You may have a little boy, Judge, and if you have you may appreciate my feelings."

"I have two boys, and I know exactly how you feel," said the Judge. "And though your wish that this prisoner be not punished too severely is a most creditable one, showing you to be tender-hearted and of a forgiving nature, I cannot pay any attention to it in passing sentence. The time has come when the rights of millionaires must be protected by the courts and observed by the people—not only the rights of millionaires, but the rights of their children. Six years in the workhouse and a fine of $5,000. And may this case be a warning to the public!"

Give and Take.

"Rockefeller must be a great believer in reciprocity."

"Why so?"

"Why, whenever he gives away a million or so he advances the price of oil."

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AN EVERYDAY MIRACLE.

BY S. E. KISER.

He scoffed at the Christian's hope and he sneered at the poet's song;
He passed the beautiful by and noticed only the wrong;
All things under the sky—mountain and plain and sea—
Were planned by a bungling hand, he said in his mockery.

The lay of the lark to him was only a dismal screech;
Wealth was the only heaven, he thought, that a man could reach;
He turned from the murmuring brook, wearing a hopeless frown,
And hid in a dismal nook in the heart of the dismal town.

On a day when the clouds were dark and the world was cold and wet
She passed where he paused a while, and he turned and their glances met;
She smiled ere she hurried on, humming a glad, sweet air.
And he saw that the clouds were gone, that beauty was everywhere.

He that had scoffed at those who hoped for a home above
Learned, being taught by her, that God was a God of love;
Mountain and plain and sea, all had become sublime
Ere the moment that he and she met for the second time.

HELPED BY A CLOUDBURST

BY NORMAN PHELPS.

"I don't care about the bridge so much," explained Dustan Carmichael, impatiently. "That is annoying and expensive and all that, but unless I can rush these papers to New York in time for the meeting it will cost me pretty close to $2,000,000. I'll give $10,000 to any man who will cross the stream."

"I wouldn't do it for the whole $2,000,000," said Cassidy, the foreman, decidedly. "Mebbe some of the boys wants to try. I'll ask 'em."

Dick Breslin looked at the raging flood. During the night there had been a cloudburst up in the mountains. The ordinarily shallow stream was swollen to a width of 300 feet and the temporary railroad bridge had been swept away.

Carmichael was practically marooned in his private car on the further bank and the current was so full of debris that none dared attempt the passage.

The rain still fell in torrents and added to the discomfort of the situation. Carmichael, president of the uncompleted Gold Gulch Railway, stormed up and down the bank.

Cassidy, the section foreman, had reported that none would attempt to cross, yet the railroad must be reached by 4 o'clock to catch the Overland. The main line was safe and a messenger could get to New York in plenty of time.

Gillis, his private secretary, paced the opposite bank. He had been down to the junction and was just back.

Breslin shared his employer's nervousness and accompanied him in his restless pacing until, from the private car, there stepped a hooded figure.

"Is it still bad?" asked the girl as he approached.

"Worse, Claire. I don't think the water will fall before tomorrow."

"And no one will try for the reward?"

"No one seems anxious to try for a suicide's grave," he laughed. "That's about what it would mean."

"Will you go halves with me?" she demanded suddenly.

"Die together?"

Claire shook her head.

"Father said we could get married when you had earned $5,000. It will take you two years with this construction gang to earn that much. We can hurry it along."

"I'm with you," he cried. "What is the idea?"

"Let's arrange with dad first." They went toward the bank. Mr. Carmichael paused to greet his daughter.

"You had better go back to the car," he said. "This weather is not made for young women."

"It won't hurt me," she said. "I've a proposition to make, dad."

"And that is?"

"You told Dick that we could get married when he had earned $5,000. Then you put him with this construction gang, and it will take two years for him to earn it at the salary you pay him."

"And you've just discovered that if I pay him more the time will be shorter? This is a bad time for discoveries."

Claire shook her head.

"Will you give us that reward if we get the papers across for you. Dick and I are partners. We'll each take half."

"You ought to help me out, anyhow," he declared.

"I won't," she said, "and Dick doesn't know how."

Her dimpled chin squared itself determinedly. Mr. Carmichael knew what that meant. She inherited his stubbornness, and he surrendered unconditionally.

She drew Breslin aside and whispered for a moment. Then she went back to their private car, while he headed in the direction of the tool car.

Some whisper of an attempt to bridge the stream was passed about and both banks were lined with workmen as Breslin returned.

"Going to shoot the box across?" demanded Cassidy, as he noticed that Dick carried a gun.

"Something like that," he admitted, as he proceeded to grease the outside of the gun [illegible]

[illegible] atched him in surprise. But his [illegible] nothing to his amazement when [illegible] to drive stakes into the clay [illegible] shing li[illegible] about it. Then [illegible] his po[illegible] a section of pipe [illegible] ste[illegible] drills and fastened [illegible] the pipe.

[illegible] ather[illegible] to watch [illegible], and, w[illegible] quiet care, Bres[illegible] cap on the gun and rested [illegible] stick. [illegible]ere was a report, the line whizzed out over the stakes, but the projectile fell short.

"I'll get it yet," he cried, as he drew another cartridge from his pocket. "I didn't want to send it so far that the cord would give out."

Slowly he drew back the line. It was not an easy matter, for the floating trees threatened several times to break the line. It was a quarter of an hour before the projectile was back on land and Dick was drying it with his handkerchief.

This time there was a heavier report, the black projectile rose in a curve and fell on the opposite bank. There Gillis caught it and raised the line out of the water.

From the telegraph kit, they obtained some light, strong rope and this in turn was drawn across. Then a water-tight box containing the papers and a letter of instruction to Gillis was fastened to the line and hauled across. Ten minutes later the puffs of smoke announced the departure of an engine for the junction.

Carmichael watched the smoke until it faded into the distance, then he turned away with a sigh of satisfaction.

"Let's go up to lunch," he said. "I haven't had any breakfast yet, and I'm hungry. Come along, Dick. I want to talk with you."

After the chill of the morning the car seemed gratefully warm and Carmichael grew genial.

"Whose scheme was that?" he demanded.

"Dick's," said Claire promptly.

"It was Claire's," corrected Breslin. "I don't want any credit that is not due me. She remembered a life gun we saw in town when we went to a fire house. It's like the life-line mortar, only you can't drop the line in the barrel. It was an easy thing to find a piece of pipe to fit the muzzle of the rifle. It was the idea that was worth while."

Carmichael smiled indulgently. "At any rate," he said, "you did your share and you did it well. When I made work a condition of my consent to your marriage I only wanted to make sure that there was good stuff in you. Claire made you her partner because she wanted you. Now I'll make you two my partners. You saved me a lot of money. Some of that will go into the finest house you want. I'll let Claire pick it out."

"I have all the money I need," objected Breslin.

"I know that, my boy," smiled the elder man. "But I want the house as a souvenir that I've got a clever daughter and as clever a son-in-law. Here's to you both," and he raised his glass.

"And here's to the cloudburst—and the opportunity," finished Claire.

Spooner's Shooting.

Senator Spooner of Wisconsin is a successful hunter of big game. On one of his trips he had for his guide Bill Murray. They were out looking for bear [illegible] deer one day, when Murray suddenly th[illegible] up his rifle and fired. The Senator saw an animal fall heavily, and called: "We've got him this time, Bill."

"We!" sneered the guide. "There's no we about it. I killed him plain enough."

Quickly making their way to where their quarry lay, they found a fine specimen of Jersey calf.

"We've killed somebody's calf!" yelled the guide.

Senator Spooner gave him a withering look and said: "William, you should be more particular in your choice of pronouns. 'We' isn't adapted to this particular instance."

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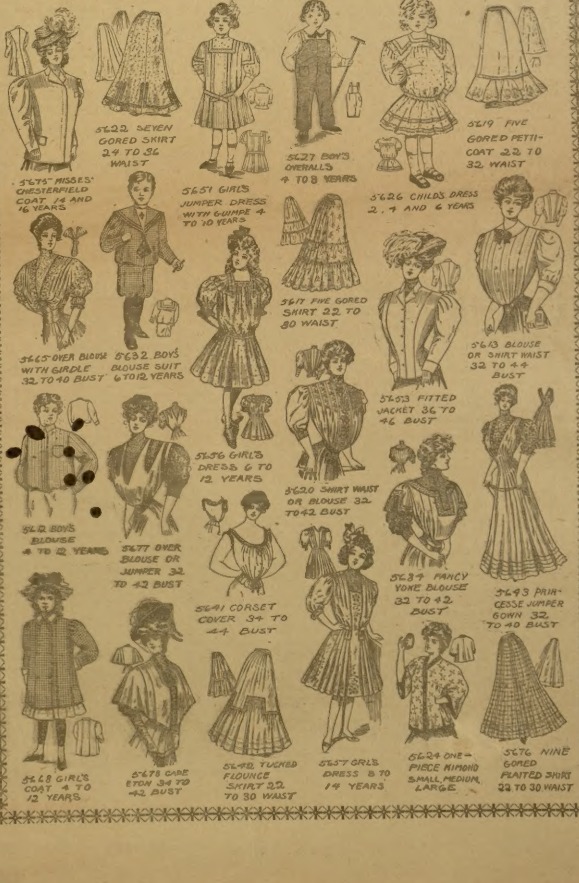
5622 SEVEN GORED SKIRT 24 TO 36 WAIST
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5665 OVER BLOUSE WITH GIRDLE 32 TO 40 BUST
5632 BOY'S BLOUSE SUIT 6 TO 12 YEARS
5653 FITTED JACKET 36 TO 46 BUST
5656 GIRL'S DRESS 6 TO 12 YEARS
5620 SHIRT WAIST OR BLOUSE 32 TO 42 BUST
5612 BOY'S BLOUSE 4 TO 12 YEARS
5677 OVER BLOUSE OR JUMPER 32 TO 42 BUST
5684 FANCY YOKE BLOUSE 32 TO 42 BUST
5641 CORSET COVER 34 TO 44 BUST
5643 PRINCESSE JUMPER GOWN 32 TO 40 BUST
5668 GIRL'S COAT 4 TO 12 YEARS
5678 CAPE ETON 34 TO 42 BUST
5642 TUCKED FLOUNCE SKIRT 22 TO 30 WAIST
5657 GIRL'S DRESS 8 TO 14 YEARS
5624 ONE-PIECE KIMONO SMALL, MEDIUM, LARGE
5676 NINE GORED PLAITED SKIRT 22 TO 30 WAIST

MOONLIGHT AND MUSIC

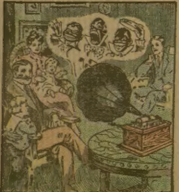
The Shining Orb of the Night and Melodious Strains from Sweet Orchestras Make Summer a Continuous Dream of Joy and Pleasure.

Are you not thrilled with music, sweet tender music, on a beautiful moonlight night? Nothing in this world so arouses the poetic fancies of men and women and nothing makes them so [illegible] as a combination of moonlight and music.

I want to tell you here how you may have the sweetest, the most tender music and ringing ragtime as well on every moonlight night this summer right on your own lawn or your own porch and it will cost you almost nothing compared with the pleasure that will be yours.

Joy for the Night

I know of no better way to spend the glorious evenings of summer than by listening to the wonderful music of a genuine Edison new style 1907 model phonograph, and for this reason I am glad to be able to place on this page full details of the great FREE TRIAL and easy-payment offer which is being made to every reader of this paper by the Edison Phonograph distributors of Chicago.



The editor of this paper is impressed by the fact that the new style 1907 model Edison phonograph is a truly wonderful machine. It does such a great variety of marvelous things —things almost beyond belief. The new style 1907 Edison phonograph is so far superior to the old style scratching imitations that you cannot imagine how sweet is the music from this marvelous new instrument. Don't form your opinion of the new style Edison by the scratchy, rasping machines you may have heard at public entertainments.

Whole Summer of Pleasure

Think of the joy that will be yours during the entire summer if you get an Edison phonograph now on the easy-payment, free-trial offer made on this page. I want you to read all about this marvelous offer because I want you to have at your command the means of the greatest entertainment you can imagine. Every afternoon, every evening, every Sunday you may have in your own house, on the porch or on the lawn, the sweet toned Edison playing the finest opera selections, the greatest band and orchestra pieces, the best vocal music, amusing recitations and comic songs. The Edison gives you anything you like. You may have a band concert any time you wish and any time you desire. Think of what this means. Your home and your lawn will then be as popular as are the parks of the great cities on the nights when the band concerts take place.

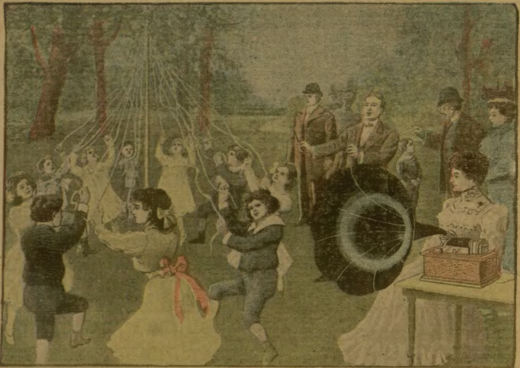
Suppose you want an evening concert to please the widest kind of taste. You get up something like this:

Sample Program for Lawn Concert

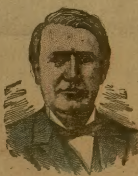
8573	"Any Rags?" medley	Vocal
9054	"Dearie"	Tenor Solo
7422	"Man Behind the Gun," march	Band
7590	"Holy City"	Violin Solo
8958	"In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree"	Vocal
4004	"Laughing Song"	Comic
1575	"Sweetest Story Ever Told"	Song
2201	"Annie Laurie"	Male Quartette
9143	"Courtship of Barney and Eileen"	Recitation
8894	"Thoroughbred," two-step	Band
644	"Titl's Serenade"	Orchestra

Read What the Editor Says

The editor advises you to take advantage of the great offer made here today. Remember you can get an Edison for free trial and may pay for it either in cash or the smallest monthly payments. The Edison catalogue of phonographs, the catalogue of 15,000 records and the great Edison poster are all furnished free. You better order them at once. Don't take the time to write a letter. Merely sign the coupon at the bottom of the page, cut or tear it out and place it in a letter and mail.



LOOK at the happy May party with the joyful children and the parents applauding at the sight of the young merry makers dancing around the pole. All are enjoying the sweet music of the Edison Phonograph. The Edison Phonograph has indeed been rightly called the king of entertainers. Summer or winter its voice carries happiness and content. If you have heard only the old style machines or the rasping, scratching imitation machines heard at country fairs and the like you cannot imagine what a treasure of good cheer, what endless entertainment the new improved genuine Edison Phonograph can give all of your family. Read what Mr. Edison says. Read below how every responsible person can get a genuine Edison Phonograph on **FREE TRIAL** to be bought, if acceptable, either for cash or on the easiest monthly payments.



TRADE MARK
Thomas A. Edison

MR. EDISON says: "I Want to See a Phonograph in Every American Home."

Thomas A. Edison

For the phonograph, as the reader may know, is the wizard's hobby. His telephone and telegraph inventions have passed into the hands of big stock companies, but the phonograph remains Mr. Edison's own. He has worked over it continuously so that today the ***new improved 1907 model genuine Edison Phonograph*** is a ***perfect*** musical instrument. ***You cannot realize*** its superiority until you have heard it and tried it yourself in your own home.

FREE TRIAL

Every responsible person is invited to a **Free Trial** of the new style improved 1907 model genuine Edison phonograph. Free trial means free trial. You pay us nothing—not one cent —no C. O. D. either. You take the instrument to your home and play all the beautiful Edison records—stirring band and orchestra records, the most laughable comic recitations, the latest songs, and up-to-the-minute hits. Let your family and friends hear the machine laugh —sing—talk—play. Then decide.—*If* you want to, you may return outfit *at our expense*— But—If you are more than pleased, if you decide to keep this king of entertainers—and we know you will—you have the choice of sending cash in full for the outfit or paying on the easiest possible payments—*and the outfit bought on time costs you as little* as if you paid cash in full.

The editor of this paper knows that this free trial offer is just as represented.

$2.00 A MONTH

now buys a genuine 1907 model Edison outfit including one dozen highly finished genuine Edison records. The finest improved 1907 model Edison outfit only $3.50 a month. And at **ROCK-BOTTOM PRICE,** *no matter whether you send the cash in full or pay on our easiest terms. Surprising rock-bottom prices* on the finest improved Edison outfits—**ONE-THIRD AND ONE-FOURTH THE PRICE OF INFERIOR IMITATIONS.**

This is a business proposition for business-like people. Every honest, responsible person is invited to a free trial. Sign the coupon and get the Edison catalogs free prepaid.

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So many cash buyers are sending for a free trial of our new 1907 model Edison that we are asked continuously what discount we can allow for cash. But as the prices for which we sell on time are already the rock-bottom prices, *below which nobody is allowed to sell,* we must state once more, that *a cash discount* is simply *impossible.*

GET THE MACHINE ON FREE TRIAL ANYWAY: later you can decided whether you want to send cash in full or whether you prefer the easy payment plan, making the payments so very easy that you can hardly feel the monthly expenses.

No Money Down—No C. O. D.

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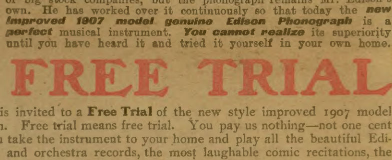

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